

402111

SELECTED VERSES
CONVEYING
THE MORAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY
OF THE
QUR'ĀN

MAHMŪD MUHTĀR-KĀTIRCIOĞLŪ

THE
WISDOM OF THE QUR'ĀN
SET FORTH IN
SELECTED VERSES
CONVEYING
THE MORAL, RELIGIOUS AND
SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY
OF
ISLAM

PRECEDED BY
AN INTRODUCTION EXPOUNDING THE
TEACHINGS OF THE QUR'ĀN

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
JOHN NAISH, M.A. (OXON.), D.D. (LOND.)

*Chief Oriental Reader, the University Press, Oxford
Sometime Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament
in Mansfield College, Oxford*

بسمه : لكل أجل كتاب To every age its Book. XIII. 38

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York
Toronto Melbourne Capetown Bombay
Calcutta Madras
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

I dedicate this work on the Wisdom of the Qur'ān to the distinguished author of *La Passion d'al-Ḥallāj*, Professor Louis Massignon, who has explained with such profound erudition the history of mysticism in the territories of Islām.

M. K.

NOTE BY PROFESSOR MASSIGNON

The lines written above impose upon me, in accordance with the wish of H.H. the Princess Ni'mat, widow of the late General Maḥmūd Muḥtār Pāsha, at once the honour and the sad duty of announcing to those who are about to read this work of ripe scholarship and reflection, the fruit of a full and mellow life, the passing of its author. A sudden heart attack took him from us, almost under my eyes, on the 18th of March, 1935, whilst we were at sea, returning from Egypt, between Syracuse and Naples. During the last weeks of his life he had been able to put the finishing touches to the final proofs of these pages which meant so much to him. They are really his spiritual last will and testament: the dying message of this Turkish Statesman addressed not only to his intimate friends, but to all the youth of his country to-day.

Louis Massignon.

Paris, April 19th, 1935.

PREFACE

THIS collection presents to the reader the essential parts of the Qur'ān, those namely which will always retain their religious, moral, philosophic, and social value. It contains about one-fifth of the verses in the Qur'ān. This means more than would seem at first sight, since but for the special circumstances which accompanied the gestation and birth of Islām the total bulk of the Qur'ān itself would have been even smaller than is the present volume. Let me make this a little clearer.

The birth of Islam, like that of every other great system of faith, was slow and agonizing. From its first appearance onwards it was surrounded by enmity and treachery. Its earliest steps were taken past the ambushes of lurking foes. As it became older there grew up along with it suspicions, malice, and hatred. When, in spite of all these, it succeeded in reaching man's estate and becoming fully adult, it was still obliged to defend itself unceasingly against frequent attacks, to fight for its very existence, and even to rage against its opponents, whom it thought of starkly as the enemies of Divine Truth. All these happenings have left their traces in the Qur'ān, which thus perforce acquired an historical, conditioned, and temporal aspect clearly distinguishable from the eternal principles of the Faith with whose characteristics we are here concerned.

After most carefully weighing and pondering on the whole of the Book we have chosen a selection which will, we hope, serve to make plain the essential spirit of Islamic teaching. And if we have not been able wholly to avoid that repetition which is such a feature of the original, it

P R E F A C E

may yet well turn out that the reiteration will not be entirely without value in that it will tend to maintain the harmony of the original text and to emphasize the relations between its various parts, and will also prove useful by increasing the stress on the main directive lines of thought.

The Qur'ān, in its original Arabic dress, has a seductive beauty and charm of its own. Couched in concise and exalted style, its brief pregnant sentences, often rhymed, possess an expressive force and explosive energy which it is extremely difficult to convey by literal word for word translation.

There are certain foreign languages into which a good many different translations of the Qur'ān have been made at various times. This multiplicity of attempts is in itself sufficient proof that previous renderings had been felt to fall short of perfection. Each fresh attempt expressed the ever renewed desire for something more fully adequate to the spirit of the original.

Every translation of the Sacred Writings of any Faith must accept conditions and restraints beyond those naturally imposed by purely linguistic considerations. A thorough knowledge of both languages, though an essential, is not in itself a sufficient qualification for him who undertakes such a task. A sacred text, if it is to live again in another tongue, must be rendered by pens themselves impregnated with the very spirit of the life of the original. Perhaps the weakest point in most translations of the Qur'ān is that they follow the mere letter far too meticulously. We have here made an entirely fresh and independent rendering of the verses* which we have

* The verse numbers in our text correspond to those of the Qur'āns printed in Constantinople.

PREFACE

selected, hoping in this way to present more accurately and vividly the actual thought of Islām.

The often too concise phrasing of the original text has demanded and received amplification, following the guidance of the best and most illustrious commentators.

The imaginative expressions and the metaphorical language in which numbers of *sūras* (or chapters) abound so luxuriantly, have necessarily been rendered with circumspection and care, but also with the continual thought of how best the essential idea or emotion might be conveyed to the alien reader. In order to give the requisite precision to the French text, the introduction of periphrases has been unavoidable. It has sometimes been necessary to sacrifice the sequences of the original Arabic and to make adjustments in the arrangement of sentences so that the rhythm and balance of the rendition might be preserved; for in making a literary translation it is indispensable — since this is in itself a complete composition in a different milieu — that the phraseology should conform to the idiom and the genius of the new tongue. This is no less important than is the exact transmission of the original thought.

Such then are, as I conceive it, the conditions demanded for complete success, far too many, perhaps, for us to anticipate the fulfilment of them all! Have we, in spite of their number and complexity, attained our object? It would be daring indeed to advance any such claim! We can but throw ourselves on the indulgence of the instructed reader.

M. K.

NOTE

BY THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR

WHEN Her Highness the Princess Ni'matu'llāh honoured me, in January of this year, with the commission to render into English this, the last work of her distinguished and lamented husband, the celebrated soldier, scholar, and mystic, Maḥmūd Muḥtār-Kātircioglu Pāsha, she requested me at the same time not to attempt any reinterpretation of the author's thought by comparison with the Arabic original of the Sacred Text. To this condition I willingly agreed, and no sooner had I begun the task laid upon me than I perceived how entirely uncalled for and irrelevant any such attempt would have been. General Maḥmūd Muḥtār has explained his object and methods with such admirable clarity in his charming preface that any further discussion on my part would be superfluous. Suffice it to say that I have endeavoured to follow the same canons in making my translation. I have, in fact, only gone back to the original once or twice where technical expressions seemed to require this, or where the transliteration of Arabic terms was in question, although it was naturally impossible that I should banish the memory of it altogether from my mind.

The course of my own studies has, I trust, in some measure qualified me for the work now completed, and enabled me to enter to some slight extent into the author's thought and the emotional experiences which have coloured it. As a young man I began the study of Arabic and the Qur'ān under that great lover of the East, Sir Thomas (then plain Dr.) Arnold, at the India Office Library.

NOTE

Proceeding afterwards to Syria, I theré became the pupil of the genial and erudite Dr. Dā'ūd Qurbān, of Beyrouth, in the Qur'ān, and of that choice Syrian scholar, Jabr Dūmīt, in Ḥadīth.

I then studied the proper method of recitation or intoning the text (تریل) with a learned shaikh in Cairo for several weeks. Subsequently, in the Punjab, I had the privilege for a whole semester of sitting daily at the feet of that great and gracious Muslim savant, Professor 'Abdu-r-Rahmān, of Delhi, with whom I inhaled the fragrance of *Nafḥatu-l-Yaman*, and by whom I was initiated into Ṣūfī lore and with him acquired Persian and wandered as his disciple adown the pleached alleyways of Sa'dī's *Gulistān*, the famous Rose Garden of the Mystics. It is therefore with unalloyed delight that I have set my feet once more in the old ways at the behest of the illustrious royal lady whose commission I now regretfully conclude. I can but hope that my temerity is not such as would have called down a rebuke from Sa'dī's modest young man in that, while practising as a cobbler, I have been thus called to prepare Pegasus for the race. For — 'hast thou not heard', quoth he, 'how

his sandal a ṣūfī sat mending,
All gaily he hammered with force,
When an officer saw him, and sending,
Cried, 'What about shoeing my horse?'

آن شنیدی که صوفی میکوفت
زیر نعلین خویش مینوی چند
آستینش گرفت سرهنگی
که بیا — نعل بر ستورم بند

J. N.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEMORIAL OF THE AUTHOR	<i>Page</i> v
PREFACE	vii
NOTE BY THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR	xi
INTRODUCTION	xvii
INDEX TO REFERENCES IN THE INTRODUCTION	lix
SELECTED VERSES OF THE QUR'AN:	
CHAPTER I	I
" II	I
" III	12
" IV	20
" V	25
" VI	28
" VII	31
" VIII	34
" IX	35
" X	36
" XI	38
" XII	39
" XIII	39
" XIV	42
" XV	44
" XVI	45
" XVII	48
" XVIII	54
" XIX	55
" XX	56
" XXI	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER XXII	<i>Page</i> 59
„ XXIII	61
„ XXIV	63
„ XXV	67
„ XXVI	69
„ XXVII	70
„ XXVIII	70
„ XXIX	71
„ XXX	73
„ XXXI	78
„ XXXII	79
„ XXXIII	79
„ XXXIV	81
„ XXXV	83
„ XXXVI	85
„ XXXVII	87
„ XXXVIII	88
„ XXXIX	89
„ XL	93
„ XLI	94
„ XLII	95
„ XLIII	98
„ XLIV	99
„ XLV	100
„ XLVI	101
„ XLVII	102
„ XLVIII	103
„ XLIX	105
„ L	106
„ LI	107
„ LII	108
„ LIII	108

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	LIV	.	.	.	.	.	<i>Page</i>	110
"	LV	.	.	.	.	.	.	110
"	LVI	.	.	.	.	.	.	111
"	LVII	.	.	.	.	.	.	112
"	LVIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	114
"	LIX	.	.	.	.	.	.	115
"	LX	.	.	.	.	.	.	116
"	LXI	.	.	.	.	.	.	117
"	LXII	.	.	.	.	.	.	117
"	LXIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	118
"	LXIV	.	.	.	.	.	.	119
"	LXV	.	.	.	.	.	.	119
"	LXVI	.	.	.	.	.	.	120
"	LXVII	.	.	.	.	.	.	121
"	LXVIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	121
"	LXIX	.	.	.	.	.	.	122
"	LXX	.	.	.	.	.	.	123
"	LXXI	.	.	.	.	.	.	125
"	LXXII	.	.	.	.	.	.	125
"	LXXIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	125
"	LXXIV	.	.	.	.	.	.	126
"	LXXV	.	.	.	.	.	.	127
"	LXXVI	.	.	.	.	.	.	127
"	LXXVII.	.	.	.	.	.	.	128
"	LXXVIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	128
"	LXXIX	.	.	.	.	.	.	129
"	LXXX	.	.	.	.	.	.	129
"	LXXXI	.	.	.	.	.	.	130
"	LXXXII.	.	.	.	.	.	.	130
"	LXXXIII	.	.	.	.	.	.	131
"	LXXXIV	.	.	.	.	.	.	132
"	LXXXV.	.	.	.	.	.	.	132

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER LXXXVI	.	.	.	.	<i>page</i> 132
„ LXXXVII	.	.	.	.	133
„ LXXXVIII	.	.	.	.	133
„ LXXXIX	.	.	.	.	134
„ XC	.	.	.	.	134
„ XCI	.	.	.	.	135
„ XCII	.	.	.	.	136
„ XCIII	.	.	.	.	136
„ XCIV	.	.	.	.	137
„ XCV	.	.	.	.	137
„ XCVI	.	.	.	.	137
„ XCVII	.	.	.	.	138
„ XCVIII	.	.	.	.	138
„ XCIX	.	.	.	.	139
„ C	.	.	.	.	139
„ CI	.	.	.	.	140
„ CII	.	.	.	.	140
„ CIII	.	.	.	.	141
„ CIV	.	.	.	.	141
„ CV	.	.	.	.	141
„ CVI	.	.	.	.	142
„ CVII	.	.	.	.	142
„ CVIII	.	.	.	.	142
„ CIX	.	.	.	.	142
„ CX	.	.	.	.	143
„ CXI	.	.	.	.	143
„ CXII	.	.	.	.	143
NOTES ON THE SELECTED VERSES	.	.	.	.	144

INTRODUCTION

A GENERAL EXPOSITION OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE QUR'ĀN

'To each period its own Book. God doeth away with what He will and preserveth what He will,' says a verse, XIII. 38, which characterizes thus, in relation to the Holy Scriptures and to the systems of religious faith and practice which preceded it, the latest Revelation, that is to say, the Qur'ān and Islām, the most recent Law in chronological sequence.

The Qur'ān, then, is thought of as having come at its own proper time, with the purpose of abrogating certain commandments, of maintaining in force what is destined to remain, and of consolidating the truths on which original and fundamental Religion rests. This Religion, says the Qur'ān, was taught by all the Prophets, amongst them by Moses and by Jesus. Accordingly there is one verse which says in so many words: 'God has opened to you the Way of Religion which He commended to Noah that he might follow in it. It is this same Faith which we have revealed to thee, and which we shewed to Abraham, to Moses, and to Jesus, to the end that true Religion might continue in the earth. Divide not yourselves into sects,' XLII. 13.

From the dogmatic and moral point of view the teachings of the Qur'ān may be summed up clearly and accurately as follows:

Religion consists in worship of the one and only Creator¹ and in conforming to his transcendent ends,

INTRODUCTION

which are firmly founded on Truth and existential Reality.² Works of charity and almsgiving are at the very base of Religion.³ Religion as thus understood is invariable, unique, and always the same.

The multiplicity of religious systems is due to the spirit of rivalry and to the exaggeration of unessential differences.⁴

*True Religion, as God has taught it to us from the earliest times, must be such as will meet the needs and longings of human nature and will form in itself the ideal toward which humanity ought to develop.*⁵

God, in his fullness and plentitude, has obviously no need of our adoration or worship. But worship is a necessity for man because that is the means whereby he draws near to God and is uplifted to that knowledge of the divine which will keep him safe from sin.⁶

No single act or slightest movement of any man is ever lost; all men will one day appear before God, and not only men but every living being of any sort.⁷ Then man will find himself faced with all that he has ever done, whether good deeds or evil. On these depends his future destiny, and he will be obliged to submit to the lot which is stored up for him according to what he has deserved. Every one will be brought back to life by a new act of creation, in a form of which he can have no conception beforehand.⁸

The ethical system of Islām is founded on charity, on unselfishness and self-abnegation, and on altruism.⁹ Piety, as one verse says in substance, does not consist in formalism, but in charity and kindness to one's neighbour, in the love of God, and in fervent adoration, together with good works.¹⁰ It is impossible to attain to piety without sacrificing something which we love.¹¹

INTRODUCTION

Alms and gifts given for show and without faith in God have no value or merit.¹² One verse advises us to emulate others and strive to surpass them in all things honourable and praiseworthy. 'To him who does good to you', says another verse, 'return it tenfold.' In a third place it is said:¹³ 'All that I ask of you is love of your neighbour...'*

The Qur'ān tells us to overcome evil with good. Forgiveness is described in it as the supreme wisdom of life,¹⁴ but forgiveness can only be the fruit of sincere repentance. God Himself grants pardon only to him whose state of mind fits him to receive it. On the other hand it is our duty to stand firm in resisting deliberate violence and outrage.¹⁵

The moral teaching of Islām is thus a pure and pellucid doctrine inculcating goodness of heart and kindness to others. It is at the same time virile and instinct with proper dignity and courage from the point of view both of the community and of the individual, in that whilst it prescribes peace, and forgiveness of those who sincerely ask for this, yet it also prescribes war against those who are incurably recalcitrant and inimical to it, and lays down penalties, even, for those who deserve it, actual death itself.¹⁶ All this instruction is to be followed, without sinning against moderation, justice, and clemency, for God, so the Qur'ān teaches us, loveth not the unjust and those who oppress their fellows.¹⁷

Human life is proclaimed in the Qur'ān to be the most precious and sacred of all things. It teaches that it is as bad to kill one innocent person as it would be to slaughter the whole human race, whilst the saving of a single life is a work as meritorious as the salvation of all humanity.¹⁸

* al-mawaddatu fil-qurbā, في المودة, XLII. 23.

INTRODUCTION

The practice of equity and sincerity in all our dealings with others,¹⁹ the brotherhood of all who share the same faith, love and respect for parents and relatives,²⁰ veracity in speech, and honesty and fidelity in keeping our engagements and carrying out what we have undertaken;²¹ kindness and sympathetic benevolence to others,²² decency and chastity between the two sexes,²³ a modest and gracious bearing among our equals, together with humility before God,²⁴ these are the virtues insisted upon from one end of the Qur'ān to the other. It tells us that good words and good deeds raise us toward God, and bring us near to Him.²⁵ In face of the trials and vicissitudes of life, it exhorts us to show courage when danger threatens, to meet disaster and sorrow with fortitude and firmness, and to persevere steadfastly in our efforts to do good.²⁶ Thus there are no virtues, either personal or social, which are not exacted of us by Islām in the name of piety and the transcendent aims and ends of Religion itself.

Faced by these exalted ethical demands, the carrying out of which is made a *sine qua non* of piety, the sincere believer is to live in a state of continual tension between the fear of sinning through ignorance or weakness, and the hope of attaining to Divine Mercy by adoration of God and charity to his fellow men.²⁷

It is interesting also to observe that Islām, contrary to what has often been thought and asserted, opened the way to the abolition of polygamy, which has been widely practised from time immemorial in the East, and exercised there almost without limit; to this last fact the Bible itself, it should be noted, bears abundant witness. The Qur'ān reduced the number of wives permitted to four

INTRODUCTION

only, whilst at the same time it strongly advises believers not to take more than one.²⁸ The regulations and rules laid down in the Qur'ān with the view of protecting women from arbitrary conduct on the part of their husbands are very numerous, and so also are those which seek to limit and restrain the extended rights hitherto exercised by men over their wives.

A great number of verses recommend the manumission of slaves in terms equivalent really to a complete interdiction of slavery,²⁹ that blot on the face of civilization, which was practised everywhere until the nineteenth century. As elsewhere, so in Musalmān society, it was maintained and kept alive only by greed and selfishness.

The ritual conditions compulsory for membership of the Islamic community are five in number:

1. The five daily prayers, instituted so that God may be continually³⁰ worshipped. (Physical, as well as moral, cleanliness is one of the conditions required of the worshipper, and is secured by means of prescribed rites for ritual purification.)
2. One month of fasting in every lunar year.
3. The undertaking of the pilgrimage to Mecca, for those whose means allow it, at least once during their lives.
4. The payment of *zakaat* or the annual requirement of alms (one-fortieth of a man's movable property) for the relief of the needy.
5. Public witness to the unity of God and the recognition of Muḥammad as His Messenger.

The main feature and supporting principle of Islām on

INTRODUCTION

which its whole structure rests is its doctrine of extensive tolerance toward the two other great Faiths. 'No constraint in matters of religion', says the Qur'ān.³¹ Therein is laid down a precept which has been always strictly and indeed rigorously observed. In Musalmān countries Christians and Jews have always enjoyed full liberty to worship in their own ways, as they have also been allowed to retain the privileges belonging to their separate communities.

A life determined and characterized by piety is, according to the doctrine of Islām, the criterion and standard of individual existence, which is destined to survive physical death. The Qur'ān likewise teaches us that life here below, fleeting and ephemeral as it is, has value only in so far as it is used to develop moral worth, and that every one will eventually reap what he has sown, whether good or evil.³² In regard to this matter, God gives help to every soul which follows His way. 'Give thy help to God and He will help thee' is thus a maxim in tune with the spirit of the Qur'ān.³³

The inequalities of social status and financial position which exist in the world are, according to the Book, to be regarded as God's way of testing and trying those who experience them. The man who should be most highly esteemed, according to the Divine Standard of judgement, is he who is most assiduous in following the commandments of God.³⁴ Those who are sincere in the practice of true piety are thought of in Islām as forming a spiritual aristocracy or élite within the barriers of the Faith. The democratic spirit which is the result of this way of thinking extends even to the actual performance of religious rites and the conduct of ordinary congregational worship.

INTRODUCTION

No professional pastor, no priestly office, exists to intervene between the individual worshipper and his Creator. There simply is not, in Islām, any **church** in the Christian sense of the word, nor is there any caste of priests or clergy as there was among the Israelites.

The idea of a collective redemption, based on a definite historical event which took place at a fixed moment in the past, and the connected notion of a purchase of freedom for humanity at the price of the torture of a god, are both equally foreign to the thought of a devout Muslim. He is an optimist in his conception of the nature of the world. For him there can never be any doubt about the final triumph of the righteous — that is fixed and certain.³⁵ Equally sure is he that heaven and earth are full of signs and wonders which witness to God's working, and of benefits which assure us of His goodness.³⁶ The Qur'ān teaches that creation is itself a manifestation of Truth and Reality, and that the world is sustained and informed by the blessing of the Lord,³⁷ who is the one and only source of Being. Nothing can happen without His permission, that is to say, unless He deems it fitting and needful for the perfecting and crowning of His work. Even evil itself, which is a devouring fire in its effect, cannot manifest itself without being allowed to do so by God, in spite of the fact that it does often depend on the free will of man, a contributory factor in human evolution which, however, is as much an outcome of the Divine Will as any other occurrences³⁸ in the universe.

The guiding principle of life in Islām is that we should make use of all that is good and lawful, without abusing our use of anything. We are even allowed to enjoy and take pleasure in that which ministers to delight, provided

INTRODUCTION

that such enjoyment is simple and healthy and does not lapse into luxurious decadence. 'Do not refuse,' says a verse, 'that part of the good things of this world which is offered to thee.' All such enjoyment must, nevertheless, be strictly within the limits of what is honest, honourable, and sincere.

Islām offers to those who would follow its teaching two different ways of life. The first is the main high road followed by the great majority of the faithful, according to the principles of doctrine and of morals which we have just laid down. The second is a narrower and more difficult path reserved for those who aspire to lose their conscious ego through its immersion in and identification with the omnipresent Personality of God, and to let their own individual free will be merged in the immanent Will which exists and functions in all things. They yearn to realize in themselves the intimacy of divinity. This is the way called **ṭarīqat** or The Path. On this Path the devout soul makes pilgrimage Godwards through the medium of prayer and invocation, of meditation, and of ascetic practices.

By means of the suggestions and influence of a spiritual guide, and by assiduous prayer and the repetition of the names of certain divine attributes, the ascetic or **ṣūfī** arrives at a state of ecstasy in which the subconscious is brought into play and thus the conscious ego is enabled to share in the general spiritual existence.

The Qur'ān contains several verses on which the **ṣūfis** base the theories and practices of their ascetic systems,⁴⁰ as well as the quietism which flows from these. The **ṣūfis** are also called **Ahl-i-Tauḥīd**, that is to say *People of the Unity*, an expression which one might render in the

INTRODUCTION

philosophical jargon of to-day by calling them spiritual monists.

The **ṭarīqats** or mystic systems are very numerous and scattered widely over the various Muḥammadan countries, under the form of religious fraternities or brotherhoods which were often the pioneers of culture and enlightenment in the darker and more backward parts of Asia and Africa, to which they were able to bring a certain amount of light and hope.

On the other hand it is but right to say that most of these brotherhoods are to-day actually in a state of cultural inferiority which threatens their very existence.

The causes which led Islām to become, side by side with the native faiths of the Indian peninsula, one of the principal rallying centres of religious esoterism, go back to the earliest centuries of the Hijra:

When that great man 'Umr **Khaṭṭāb**, the chief adviser of the Prophet and the second caliph to take his place after his death, was assassinated, disorder threatened the newly created State. Everybody wanted to be some one, or become something, special and distinguished. Those who could find nothing better to do, arrogated to themselves a special rank, a new kind of distinction, in order to set themselves above others. They invented for themselves the profession of the **Muḥaddiths**, that is, the people whose task it should be to transmit to and preserve for posterity the memory of the words, the deeds, and the actions of the Prophet.

The first centuries of the Hijra were exceedingly fruitful in producing those traditions called **Ḥadīth**, of which the greater part plainly betrayed heretical tendencies,

INTRODUCTION

each fresh group which embraced Islām bringing with it in turn some small contribution of its own to enrich the general stock. Thus some Ḥadīth were borrowed from the Old Testament or from the Gospel. Other Ḥadīth bore quite clearly the marks of Latin, Greek, Hindu, or even Persian, influence. Stoic teaching also found entrance and had a large share in the whole. Thus the Ḥadīth formed an enormous mass of tendencious traditions, whose tenour was sometimes mutually contradictory. The most innocent and unexceptionable among them continued to be those which were merely travestied and retouched verses from the Qur'ān.

The orthodox faith ran a grave risk of being submerged and drowned in this flood of pretended precepts of the Prophet. It did well to be alarmed and had just cause to be so. In the effort to avert this danger there arose groups of men who devoted their talents and gave up their lives to the examination and verification of the innumerable Ḥadīth which were circulating among the people. In order to control the authenticity of these, they took pains to find out and record the chain of those who had transmitted each tradition and to establish their reliability and good faith. The Ḥadīth were recognized as more or less genuine, according as a more or less unbroken chain of transmitters could be shown to go back to a contemporary or companion (ṣāḥib) of the Prophet. The profound respect in which these last were held caused the investigators to have no doubt about the perfect accuracy of anything which they could be shown to have said.

These researches, even if they did not succeed in purging out all the foreign elements which had crept in, had at least the good effect of reducing very considerably

INTRODUCTION

the total number of accepted **Ḥadīth**, which, however, still fill several large volumes. Nevertheless, Muḥammadan orthodoxy was sensibly consolidated as a result of all this investigation. Towards the end of the third century of the Hijra Hadithology became a definite organized body of knowledge and the collections of **Ḥadīth** were more frequently consulted than was the very Qur'ān itself. They became the real standard by which the life of Islām was regulated.

The great **Imāms** or Casuists who, about the same time, completed the dogmatic and juristic edifice of the four orthodox legal schools of Islām, having soon thereafter acquired a fixed reputation as holy persons whose judgement had been infallible, their decisions thenceforth formed a second body of rules side by side with the traditions which were traced back to Muḥammad and no less respected than were these.

The formalism which resulted from the recognition of these masses of authoritative teaching tended to give a fixed form to the transcendent nature and function of Islām, which thus began to take on more and more the character of an organized church.*

Conditions similar to these often end in stirring up uneasiness and discontent and arousing in choicer spirits the impulse to seek a refuge in esoteric cults from the externalism of cut and dried forms. In so doing they

* [*Église*. But 'religious community' might be a better rendering. This statement is not really in conflict with what is said above on p. xxiii. The idea of a church as the sole repository of supernatural sacramental grace and of its clergy as the unique media through whom this grace is dispensed to mankind, that is, the idea of church and clergy in the Christian sense, is foreign to and unknown in Islām. —*Translator*.]

INTRODUCTION

hope for the intimate realization of a spiritual state in which they will be delivered from the formalism of casuistry. Thus Islām became aware of the awakening in its own bosom of an ascetic tendency which rapidly developed into a vast series of movements, the general tone and hue of the Qur'ān making it a field favourable to the growth of esoteric practices.* But this plain fact did not in the least hinder Musalmān orthodoxy from regarding the *ṭarīqats* for many centuries as *bid'a*, that is to say as a useless or even harmful innovation.

We hasten to add that as a matter of actual fact these fraternities, their aims having been diverted from the object which their originators had in view, and having themselves often become degenerate through the ignorance and superstition of their present adherents, have to-day lost much of the respect with which they were once rightly regarded. They were even directly suppressed in Turkey where the rising spirit of anti-clerical modernism thought it desirable to destroy the bridges which maintained a connexion with the outmoded past.

The ontology of the Qur'ān is both delicate in its subtle distinctions and sublime in its exalted conceptions. It recognizes Divinity as from its very nature inaccessible to the understanding, and essentially incomparable to anything whatever, having no analogy in anything within our experience. God is not even to be thought of as Spirit, Spirit being itself an effect of His will.⁴¹ He is the

* Amongst the esoteric expositions of the Qur'ān, the most important is attributed to the pen of the great philosophic mystic of Islām, Muḥyi ud-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī, محیی الدین بن العربی, who flourished during the thirteenth century and died in Damascus.

INTRODUCTION

conscious creator of all and is free from any control by that which He has made or entanglement with his own work,⁴² which He moulds to perfection⁴³ through His immanent presence in it. He transforms everything by a continual process of evolution. His action extends into and has effect on all things. It is God who causes the seeds of corn to germinate, and who decrees life and death. It is He who nourishes and He who disintegrates; when any one is attacked by disease, it is still God himself who is the healer.⁴⁴ He is the great being inseparable from existence who sees, hears, and controls everything. He is the most intimate companion of every human soul.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, if we wish to experience the healing and sustaining effects of His grace it is essential that we should meditate continually on His omnipresence and regularly invoke Him in prayer. He is the friend of those who believe in Him and follow in His way, the way of salvation.⁴⁶ His attitude toward us only changes in so far as we ourselves change from good to evil or vice versa. In His pity for men he summons every one to take up his inheritance in the dwelling of eternal peace, and promises His grace to those who return to Him.⁴⁷

God, the one and only source of existence and of power,⁴⁸ is at the beginning and end, on the surface and at the origin, of all things.⁴⁹ He is the supreme creator, not only of man, but also of what man himself accomplishes.⁵⁰ He is then the immanent* Divinity who is

* Herein lies a tenet of the şūfīist philosophy which makes it possible for the **tauḥīdists**, that is to say, the spiritual monists, to maintain that good and evil do not originate from different sources. They say: 'That which God wills, is, and that which God does not will, does not exist at all.' *Mā shā' Allāhu kāna, wa mā lam yashā', lam yakun.*

ما شاء الله كان وما لم يشاء لم يكن

INTRODUCTION

present as intervener in all parts of the universe and whose will is immutable and eternal.⁵¹ He cannot be seen by our eyes, yet He Himself is aware of every yearning regard of ours. He is the infinitely subtle and impalpable, the vast imponderable which at once embraces⁵² and intellectually comprehends all existence.

Howsoever indulgent and full of pity, yet God is also the avenger in relation to those who go counter to His designs and oppose His will. Though He created life, it is also true that He decrees death. Though He brought paradise and eternal beatitude into existence, He also created the lake of fire and eternal suffering. The elucidation of the apparent contradictions which appear at first sight to be involved in these statements calls for careful reflection, as is always the case where religious teaching is in question.

This God, omnipresent in His work, omnipotent in His will, and immanent in the organic relations of existence inherent in the process of evolution, is also the Absolute, the Infinite, and the Immutable. He is the transcendent God, independent of time and space and untouched by and inaccessible to the troubles and disturbances incident to the ephemeral world in which we live.

He is the Supreme Being whose will develops and unfolds through an infinite progression of varying existences. The vast abyss which separates this completely transcendent Deity, unattainable and unreachable by human intelligence, from the actual palpable world which is in process of evolution, is indicated by that verse of the Qur'ān which tells us that even the Spirit itself and the very angels would need fifty thousand years for the journey upward to the Divine Presence. The immense distance thus

INTRODUCTION

described is, of course, to be understood as a qualitative difference illustrated by a quantitative metaphor.⁵³

It is by no means easy to conceive how the passage of immutable and abstract Being into Becoming, which is both concrete and in continual movement, can take place.

In order to combine these two different spiritual conditions of the same Divine Being, the ancients invented myths which should illustrate metaphorically the philosophical notion. But this form of explanation was made at the expense of the Unity, at the cost of falling into polytheism and even into idolatry. The trinitarian formula of orthodox Christianity, which dates from more recent times, marks the latest stage in the development of this conception of a hierarchy of divinities, conceived in an attempt to combine the Concrete with the Abstract, the Relative with the Absolute.

The complete monotheism of Islām forbade it the use of such concepts as these. Therefore Muḥammadan theology was obliged to confine itself to saying that we recognize in God the Supreme Being, one and indivisible, the source and origin of all existence, but that we cannot say what in fact He is, nor how He works, since He is not like anything of which we have knowledge, nor can He be compared to anything in our experience. Nevertheless the attempt has been made to define the nature of God by quoting the attributes enunciated in the Qur'ān, of which three principal categories are distinguished:

1. The primordial attribute, *nafsīya* (نفسی): Being.
2. Essential attributes, *zātīya* (ذاتی): Anteriority, Eternity, Plenitude, Originality, Unity.
3. Constant attributes, *subūtīya* (ثبوتی): Life, Wisdom, Hearing, Sight, Will, Speech, Creation.

INTRODUCTION

These thirteen attributes express the essence of the person or hypostasis, that is to say, of the Divine Entity.*

Theological dogma recognizes a total of ninety-nine attributes, all drawn from the Qur'ān. They represent, in combination, the spiritual elements indispensable for cosmic development and the potentialities of differentiated existences, according to a realist conception of the same.

According to this notion of God's being His action on the world is that of a spiritual sun, whose rays — which are these attributes — create, maintain, and transform it.

Thinking along these lines, Muḥammadan theology distinguishes:

1. *Zāt* (ذات) or the divine hypostasis, the source of all existence;
2. The *ṣifāt* (صفات) or attributes, which flow from the Creative Entity;
3. The *af'āl* (افعال) or acts of differentiation which emanate from Divinity.

This triad, which forms in itself a series completing the passage of the imponderable to the actual and a graduation of the Divine Will in the course of its development to the final material crystallization, is, of course, simply and entirely conceptual and as such is based on verses of the Qur'ān.⁵⁴ The theodicy of Islām could not, it is plain, ever allow to it an objective reality such as would permit of its development into any sort of trinitarian dogma whatever.

Obsolete complexities of this kind would moreover be

* These same attributes are considered as forming the basis of the divine nature of man. The activity of the divine hypostasis in the existence of its vicar on earth, as this activity is clearly defined in Qur'ān II. 31, would be demonstrated by the presence of this basis.

INTRODUCTION

superfluous in face of verses like the following: 'He is the beginning and the end, the apparent and the foundation,' LVII. 3; or again: 'Wheresoever ye may turn yourselves, there the face of God rises before you,' II. 115. Such teaching only just avoids pantheism. But this conception of God puts man in immediate contact with his Creator, who is both within him and all around him.

The divine hypostasis, impalpable and imponderable as it is, becomes, from this point of view, accessible at least to invocation, if not to comprehension by the intellect. God, says the Qur'ān in effect, passes between a man and his heart, that is to say, *dwells* among his most intimate thoughts and emotions. He commands man to pray to Him and declares that He is nearer to men than are their own arteries. Thus man has but to meditate constantly and assiduously about God in order to realize in himself the effects of divine grace.⁵⁵

There is a verse which tells us that God sends his blessing to mankind and that the angels pray for them that they may be drawn from darkness to light.⁵⁶ Here the divine omnipotence does not come into play at all, but simply His desire to save man, who remains so far independent in virtue of his own will. God only invites him and instructs him by the teachings of religion. It belongs to man alone to choose his own way.

The divine thought and interest are constantly busy throughout all creation, since God, according to the Qur'ān, is continually occupied in its improvement and betterment;⁵⁷ for material differentiation produces beings more or less perfect, more or less near to God, in beauty and completeness.

INTRODUCTION

This process implies the existence of two divergent directions in the evolution of existence: the one ascending, the other descending. Man's own inclinations have a correspondingly double nature drawing him to one side or to the other. Nevertheless he remains the judge and master of his own choice. Thus it is he himself who determines his own destiny in the future. This duality in the nature of the human soul is explained in the Qur'ān as due to the presence and supremacy of a **Rūḥ** or Spirit. The soul is also imbued with **Shākilat**, that is to say with formative power, whose natural tendency is in the direction of the attainment of material realities, that is, in the direction of ruin and perdition.⁵⁸

*The Spirit, this gift of God with which man has been endowed as the ascending element in his spiritual constitution, makes him a being intermediate between the Heavenly and the Earthly. In him the ways of ascent and descent meet and cross. Intellect, the organ by virtue of which the soul subsists, acquires, thanks to the presence of Spirit, objectivity and universality. But yet it does not succeed in the full attainment of light, such attainment being possible only by the aid of divine pity.*⁵⁹

The Qur'ān declares that the soul, furnished with intellect as it is, is yet ineffective for good, and inclined to evil, XII. 53. But its destiny urges it toward God and incites it to become the 'repentant soul'. Proceeding thus the human intellect is summoned to be itself transformed into a receptacle for divine intuitions. These are, according to the **ṭarīqat**, the three first stages of the soul's progress. The next following stages, to the number of four, are called those of the Spirit, which, according to

INTRODUCTION

esoteric doctrine, then acquires dominance over the soul and purifies it from its earthly desires and yearnings.

The names of the seven stations which mark out this ascetic road are, except the last, all borrowed from the Qur'ān.⁶⁰

Such notions are based on Qur'ānic verses like the following: 'It is He who hath created the shadows and the light.' VI. 1. The doctrine of duality is plainly evident in such passages.

The shadows, in the plural, go before the light. With its usual conciseness the Qur'ān thus expresses for us the essence of Genesis, both in the physical and the moral spheres. *All men are born originally of a single pair, it teaches in another place.*⁶¹ By the word pair we may understand that the idea of complementary elements is conveyed to us. Design is produced by contrasts and the march and movement of existence is the result of the meeting of heterogeneous elements. We are here not far removed from the conceptions of mazdaism and of Zoroastrianism, although it is true that in Islām the fire which burns and the flame which lights up the truth for us are not different from one another in their essential nature. For the Musalmān it depends on the attitude of the individual whether he shall be respectively burned or enlightened.

Absolute faith in the Light is indispensable for enlightenment. The chaotic shadows, which have their dwelling in the soul of man as they have in the universe at large, will then be dispersed. God, says a verse of the Qur'ān, enlightens the heart of the man who believes in Him.⁶² Happiness thus depends on belief in God and in the life to come. The adoration and invocation of God, according to other verses, fill man with the desire to adopt a

INTRODUCTION

sort of transcendent life, and secure freedom of spirit and peace of mind in this world and afterwards ascent into the next. The inequalities incident to human life and fortune here below are thus nullified and made ineffective in the face of this will to attain the higher levels of existence.

Judging according to the spirit of Qur'ānic eschatology, a firm belief in survival after death and the will to continue in existence together play an essential part in the life and existence of the soul. The vital elements, set free at decease, maintain their integrity thereafter under the aegis of the Spirit.

In Islām God is everything. He is the unique object of worship, the only factor of redemption, the one saviour. Prophets and Apostles are but his messengers, and their function is merely to warn and to comfort men as He commands. They are themselves simply men, though highly venerated, and no more at most than examples of how men may follow God's way. We pray for them and invoke the Peace and Blessing of God upon them. We seek to comprehend the greatness of their spiritual attainments in order that by meditating on them we may ourselves find enlightenment. Any other way of regarding them would be directly contrary to the teachings of the Qur'ān, which forbids us to adopt either angel or sage as patron or protector. The Book declares, in effect, that Religion is older than Prophets and Scriptures.⁶³ Nothing then could be more contradictory of the spirit of Islām than to call Religion by any specialist term such as Mosaism, Christianity, or Muḥammadanism.

The Qur'ān applies the generic title *muslimīn* to all those who have believed in God in times past or present.

INTRODUCTION

It is in this spirit so immensely pregnant with consequences — too much so perhaps for the epoch when it found expression — that two verses proclaim divine mercy and blessing, without distinction of creed or cult, on all those who worship God, who believe in the last judgement, and who give themselves up to good works.⁶⁴

The Qur'ān tells us that men only know the surface of life. Implicitly it invites us to penetrate below that surface and attempt to grasp the meanings of things. Man, it declares, is himself a source of wonders and miracles.⁶⁵

We are here at once in an esoteric domain which has long been supposed foreign to the nature of Islām. We have often been tempted to see in its founder the typical realist in whose mental make-up the spirit of intellectual clarity is the dominant factor. It has generally been forgotten that Muḥammad toiled for years along the path of self-denial and asceticism in a long and weary search for truth before he eventually emerged as the preacher of Islām.

Like all other systems of religious faith, Islām has a determinist side apparently in direct conflict with the doctrines of free will and human responsibility which are deliberately affirmed throughout the Qur'ān. The fierce discussions and disputes to which this problem gave rise in the early centuries of the Christian era were renewed during the formative period which succeeded the Hijra.

The world of Islām ended then both by recognizing the existence of free will as an essential attribute and privilege of every human being, and at the same time by asserting with equal force and directness the paramount influence

INTRODUCTION

of destiny on our lives and the course of the universe. The paradox was complete.

A predestination which precedes the existence of the individual possesses a primacy which is superior to and free from the chains of cause and effect inherent in events. It is thus really a contradiction of personal free will understood as something actual and concrete. Such a will is an objective reality limited by its means of action and the circumstances in which it finds itself, and often tangible in its effects. It seems to escape the abstract influence of a general antecedent predestination. It was necessary then to admit the existence of this latter, as an act of religious faith, whilst at the same time personal free will, disengaging itself even from the obvious objective realities of life, was assumed to be effective everywhere and at all times. Moreover, liberty of action and an undetermined future are firmly entrenched as the basis underlying the very cosmogony of the Qur'ān itself, in which one may read: 'And thy Lord createth whatsoe'er He will and howsoe'er He will.' xxxiii. 68. The biblical statement that man was created in the image of God being confirmed by Muḥammadan tradition, it follows that liberty of action and free will, in so much as these are *divine attributes, cannot therefore be omitted from the qualities which must be ascribed to man. The Musalmān determinists thus ended by giving in on this point and admitting that liberty of action is an implicit condition of moral responsibility without which it cannot exist. Thus the fatalism which is in general casually attributed to Islām by those who write of it, is no more an essential element of its basic principles than is the case with any other of the great faiths.*

INTRODUCTION

Man, whom the Qur'ān defines as the representative on earth of immanent Divinity, possesses the faculties necessary for judging and acting on his own account. Many are the verses which treat of this subject, and the Qur'ān frequently returns to the scene of the creation of man in order to make quite clear his supreme rank in the creative scheme.

The Qur'ānic allegory regarding his fall in the scale of material existence deserves to be thoroughly studied. In accord with the most ancient traditions the Qur'ān teaches that God first created man from terrestrial matter and then completed and perfected him and breathed His own spirit into him. God thus opened the way for him to the attainment of understanding, feeling, and judgement. A distinct human personality, complete and independent, was to be born

INTRODUCTION

its position by quotation of other passages in the Book. It is impossible to leave out of account the esoteric ideas current in the world of Islām if we wish to comprehend anything of the inner spiritual life of a great number of its adepts. Let us take a closer look at what, according to these last, is the real meaning of the Qur'ānic allegory of original sin. The angels, it is said, represent the emotional and moral forces of human nature. They are all divine in origin, since all power, according to the Qur'ān, dwells in and springs from God alone. The prostration of the angels before man, when in possession of dynamic spiritual force, signifies, they say, the submission of all these powers to his transcendental will. Satan, who is declared in the Qur'ān, as we have said above, to have had his origin in a smokeless flame, and who is represented in the Bible by a snake, that is to say, as crude elemental force let loose on earth, is explained by this esoteric exegesis as being the fire of earth-born passions which will inevitably consume man, unless he should succeed in getting free from them through the power of faith.

The forbidden tree or fruit, according to the same interpretation, represents terrestrial nourishment before its transformation into mere refuse and offal, that is, into physical obsessions or egocentric factors. Original sin comes into existence when duality arises, ending in complete fission or differentiation of being, in opposition to the ideal of fusion with the All-One.

This symbolic process, which takes place in God or in the preknowledge of God, is, they explain, actualized in due proportion in every human personality.

The forces acting in man are thus to be thought of realistically as capable of becoming objectively active in

INTRODUCTION

favour of or in enmity to man, according to their respective natures. Sūra CXIV, the last in the Qur'ān, bears express witness to this when it exhorts us to invoke God as follows:

Say: I seek shelter with the Lord of men, with the Master of men, with the God of men, from the suggestions of the Tempter who inciteth to evil, even in the very breast of man; and from insidious secret thoughts which are hidden from sight, as likewise from men who follow after the same.

Thus the human will is declared to possess a reality in the realm of spirit against which it is sometimes impossible to contend, and to be able to externalize itself in a precise and definite manner; whilst in the invocation of God it can exert an influence no less real or efficacious. The last Sūra but one of the Qur'ān, realistic as all the Sacred Writings are, consists, following this same line of thought, in the following prayer invoking divine aid against malign forces:

I take refuge with the Master of the earliest Dawn against the wickedness and hatred of his creatures, against the evil which is hatched beneath the veil of darkness when it spreadeth over the earth, against the sorcerers who breathe over their knots as they work black magic, against the envious when they cast the darts of their jealousy.

The Qur'ān is defined as the divine Word which was sent down into the heart of the Prophet with the Holy Spirit, that men might thereby be drawn from darkness into light. To judge from its description as **Rūḥu'l-Quds** or Holy Spirit, this divine messenger would seem to be considered, from the Qur'ānic point of view, as being identical with that which is an element in the Christian Trinity.

In speaking of Christ, Sūra II. 253 declares that: 'We granted to Jesus, the son of Mary, the gift of performing miracles and we strengthened him by the Holy Spirit. . . .'

INTRODUCTION

Further on we read in Sūra xvi. 102: 'Say thou that the Holy Spirit brought it [the Qur'ān] down from thy Lord. In speaking of the Immaculate Conception, it is said: 'We breathed into her [Mary] of our Spirit.' xxi. 91.

In the same way the Spirit is mentioned, for example, when God is speaking to the angels in xxxviii. 72 regarding His determination to create mankind. He says: 'When I shall have perfected him and breathed my Spirit into him, then prostrate yourselves before him as a sign of respect and veneration.' In all these verses we find the same word used, *Rūḥ* or Spirit.

The Muḥammadan commentators affirm, on the strength of Biblical or oral traditions, that the word *Rūḥ* refers to the angel Gabriel. The Book itself is less explicit, since in it God advises the Prophet to say merely that the Spirit is a result of His will, incomprehensible by the human intellect.*

In one verse it would appear that the Spirit and the Revelation are identical. We read there: 'Thus did We reveal a Spirit of Our Will.' xlii. 52.

If we consider together the whole of the numerous verses which treat of the Spirit, we shall be obliged to conclude that some intimate element of the divine nature is intended, as for instance the following verse testifies: '... they are of those ... whom He hath confirmed by a Spirit which pertaineth to Himself.' lviii. 22.

* It is true, however, that in two verses 'angel' and 'Spirit' are expressly distinguished from one another, namely, in lxxiv. 4 and xciv. 4. The Arabic word *jabr* جبر corresponds to the Hebrew word גבר which signifies 'powerful', 'mighty'. In liii, where we read that Muḥammad was initiated into the secret of the Faith by the most mighty Spirit, it is explained that the reference is to the angel Gabriel (גבריאל; جبرائيل).

INTRODUCTION

The extensive collection which forms the Sacred Book consists of a great number of chapters or **sūras** composed at various times during the course of twenty years. From certain passages occurring in it it would seem that the whole is a subsequent development of the divine Word or Speech which was incarnate in Muḥammad from the blessed night of **Qadr** when he experienced its first great manifestation, onwards throughout the rest of his life. Several verses, indeed, declare in so many words that the Qur'ān came down from heaven on the night of *Qadr*⁶⁶ during the month of Ramaḍān, the lunar month which was thereafter consecrated to ritual fasting. It was on that night that the Celestial Messenger, who was thenceforward to illumine his way, revealed himself to the Prophet. It is to this event, pregnant with consequences, that the Qur'ān alludes in Sūra cviii, when it says: 'We have poured out divine nectar for thee'

Starting from this point, it is easy to understand that there have always been those who thought that it was possible to distinguish Qur'ān from Qur'ān, within the covers of the one Book. Whilst the first of these, the original **Qur'ān**, came down in a single night, as the prime vehicle of Initiation, that which stands written developed gradually in its present form, as events successively called forth the various Sūras. The first Qur'ān, or original initiative revelation, is then to be regarded, according to such interpreters, as the original fount and the quintessential kernel of the volume which we possess.

The Qur'ān discusses a great variety of subjects within the total of its pages. It is a code of morals and of social and religious philosophy. It contains materials for the

INTRODUCTION

construction of systems of law and jurisprudence, as it does also maxims and principles of dogma and of faith. Rules for the conduct of domestic and collective life are to be found in it. It is full of eschatological information and offers us many ontological data. Polemics also take up much space in it. The decisive events which occurred during the nascent development of Islām have also their places in the Qur'ān, which thus shows us the historical aspect of the struggles and changes of fortune experienced by the faithful during this early period. Promises and threats conceived in the true Biblical spirit abound in the text.

In several chapters the Qur'ān enlarges on the ancient prophets and discusses at some length the religious and moral aspects of their characters. The ethical teaching which thus emerges is far superior to anything which we learn about them from the pages of the Bible. This is, by the way, most probably the reason why the Musulmān is inclined to look on all the prophets with equal veneration, since they are all regarded by him as having been illumined by the Spirit and by the light of the Divine.

The literary style and construction of the Qur'ān do not always follow the strict rules of classical Arabic syntax and rhetoric. The original text passes easily without conscious transition from the plural to the singular or *vice versa*, and similarly from the third to the first or second person. Ellipses and anacoluthons are very numerous. These peculiar features often make it necessary to employ a commentary in order to get at the real meaning of a passage.

Theories like those of the Paulicians or the earlier Marcionites based on the idea of the usurpation of divine

INTRODUCTION

authority by a demiurge served by rebel angels, who, thanks to the arrival on the scene of a Logos in the form of a Christ or Messiah, was gradually reduced to impotence, his decline in power dating from a definite moment in time, were never able to gain any hold in Islām. Its monotheism, standing firmly on the fundamental conception of the divine immanence and omnipotence of the transcendent God, completely excluded all philosophic speculation about the nature of deity, whether Platonic or otherwise. Thus the successive Messengers sent by God to mankind were able, according to the doctrine of orthodox Islām, to teach the same identical and unchangeable Truth throughout the changing ages and to recall men to it from period to period.

Islām recognizes four great prophets: Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. They are called the **Ulu'l-'Azm**, that is to say, the Sublime Will.* The expression is Qur'ānic and the denotation definitely dogmatic. All four are regarded as of equal worth, and, of course, as holding exactly the same mutual belief.

Chapter III of the Book distinguishes between **Muḥkamāt**, that is to say, parts pertaining to the literal essence, and **Mutashābihāt**, metaphorical portions. These latter are not of the same importance as the former. Other verses announce that God abolishes his commands or replaces them by others, as need or changing circumstances require. Sixty verses were in fact abrogated during the lifetime of the Prophet. Others, which no longer corresponded to the realities of the situation, came to be regarded as obsolete in the following period.

The editing and arrangement of the Book was begun

* **أولو العزم** literally 'The Lords of High Emprise' [*Translator*].

INTRODUCTION

at the death of the Prophet, by the first caliph, Abū Bakr, in the way in which the Prophet himself would have wished it to be done. It was the third caliph, 'Uthmān, who finished the recension, exercising a rigorous control over the work whilst it was in process: he did not, however, succeed in arranging the chapters or sūras in any rational or chronological order. No additions or alterations have been permitted since his time and our present text is therefore identical with that authorized by him.

Thus we have in the Qur'ān a perfectly authentic and contemporary document, whose evidence is more definitely historical in the strict critical sense of the word, than is that for many aspects of the life-story of him who dictated it.

The first biographers of the Prophet began to write more than half a century after his death. Now we know that the most recent contemporary occurrences are often misrepresented or even deliberately distorted in the accounts of those who report them. What exact historical value ought we then to attach to the records of events composed in various distant countries, after long intervals of time, concerning a man whose work upset all the fixed ideas of his period, and who, beside a vast number of friends, had also a host of enemies?

In the West detractors of the Prophet and his work are naturally legion. As the scientific spirit became more and more exacting, so historical critics became more and more objective and realist. On the other hand it must be admitted that Muḥammadan historians were often little more than panegyrists.

INTRODUCTION

Let us try, however, to be ourselves severely realist and unbiased.

The life of Muḥammad, fertile in the production of the most amazing results, and rich in the events which flowed immediately from it, was in itself simple and consistent. It was that of a man without vagaries or side-tracks, who marched straight forward to his goal and knew exactly where he wanted to go. The outstanding traits of this life were, in all circumstances, a sense and healthy grasp of realities and an ideal governing all his actions which transcended the normal aims of human existence.

His burning faith in his own mission, backed up by superior intellectual gifts and an inflexible will, made it possible for him to overcome all the difficulties and surmount all the obstacles which rose before him as he went on.

His candour and straightforward dealing had gained for him, already as a youth, the nickname of **al-Amin** (الامين) or the Faithful One. The intellectual and emotional qualities with which he was naturally endowed seem to have been reinforced by physical powers no less unusual and remarkable. He was thus a man created to rule and to direct others, no less than to be loved and venerated in his own person.

A profound feeling of piety was the note which dominated the inner life of Muḥammad. At a given moment he could even say in the Qur'ān: 'My adoration, my offerings, my life and my death, are vowed to God, the Lord of the Worlds.' It was written in his destiny that he was to be called, thirteen centuries ago, to bring back to God myriads of souls now walking in the way of righteousness.

Muḥammad was a scion of the illustrious family of

INTRODUCTION

Hāshim, whose pedigree is said to go back without a break to Ishmael the son of Abraham.

During his youth he made many journeys, notably into Syria, as did others of his countrymen who gained their livelihood by trading as merchants. His first wife was Khadija, a wealthy lady of Mecca. Muḥammad lived with her for several happy years. She was indeed the first to embrace Islām when her husband, at the age of forty, received the initial revelation of his mission to mankind.

During his young manhood he proved himself, like Socrates, a good citizen, and a valiant warrior in the fights which took place against the robber tribes of the desert. In the severer struggles for the victory of Islam, he showed himself to be a great military leader, like Joshua of old. A man utterly fearless in danger, his calmness and confidence, resting on complete trust in God, reacted on all his followers. Reverses and defeats but inflamed his ardour and stimulated his will to conquer. In the hour of triumph he was the generous and humane victor, but also the severe and unbending instrument of justice on occasions when the security of the cause allowed him no choice. In his private life he was simple, modest, affable, and always full of wisdom and good sense.

After the death of Khadija he always preserved a pious and precious memory of her. Following the example of the Biblical prophets and the custom of the period, he subsequently contracted several marriages, some of which were dictated by social reasons and opportunities.

It is thought that he was illiterate. That certainly is not necessarily contradicted by the known fact that he had contact during his youth with people from whom he

INTRODUCTION

might have learned. From the age of twenty-five onwards he was frequently seen to seek solitude in a cave in the hills, on the outskirts of Mecca, so that he might there give himself up to prayer and meditation. It is clear that he was by no means the only man among his contemporaries with such yearnings, but among them all he was the Chosen and Predestined Vessel.

At the opening of the seventh century of our era morals were at a low ebb and an extreme state of license obtained. Impiety was dominant, and the social fabric was soiled and stained by many hateful and barbarous customs. People of sensitive and delicate nature were seeking refuge from the flood of advancing evil.

The Arabs, split up into a number of independent tribes and communities, were in a state of continuous internecine warfare. Jews, Christians, and idolaters jostled one another in that part of Arabia where the future prophet was to be born without either becoming assimilated or ceasing to be hostile to each other. As to any central authority, it simply did not exist. This chaotic state of things favoured the emergence and growth of a new social and religious element, the sect of the *ḥanīfs*, for whom the only way of salvation consisted in a return to the ancient faith of Abraham. This patriarch they believed to have been the founder of Mecca and his son Ishmael they regarded as their own ultimate ancestor.

This sect, of which Muḥammad was certainly at one time a member, did not admit the existence of the schism which divided Jews and Christians. They remained deaf to arguments in favour of the Trinity, whilst they were equally unconvinced by the refusal of the Jews to recognize the Messiah in Jesus. Thus they could not bring

INTRODUCTION

themselves to embrace either of these two faiths, both of which they regarded as standing in the relation of heresies to the original faith of Abraham.

To that faith they gave the title of **Qayyim** or the fundamental and unchangeable. It would seem that amongst these people the term *Islām* was already in use to express the 'return to salvation', even before this word was canonized by its employment in the Qur'ān, where the word *ḥanīf* also occurs as denoting those who were returning to the one and only God.

Although doubtless numerous, yet the *ḥanīfs* were scattered all over Arabia and had no cohesion or rallying centre. They lacked the man of destiny, the Elect who should reunite them in a single organized cult, give them dogmatic and social weight and dignity, and raise them to the rank of a mediating element combining the best of both the Jewish and the Christian faiths.

According to Arab historians there was a widespread expectation of the approaching arrival of such a Messiah. There had been no lack of premonitory signs and miracles announcing to those who had insight the imminence of the coming of the anticipated Apostle.

This Chosen One, this destined Apostle, was no other than Muḥammad himself.

One night, whilst absorbed in meditation, the future Prophet saw, not without an access of terror, a sublime Being, called Magnificent in the Qur'ān, appear on the horizon. This Being descended to earth and came nearer to Muḥammad, until finally His essence was mingled with that of the Prophet. Two years passed by and then he had another experience of the same kind. The Spirit conveyed

INTRODUCTION

to him the divine command to spread the faith abroad and to exhort the world to unite in adoration of the one and only God. These miraculous occurrences are summarily described in Chapters LIII. 1-18 and LXXXI. 19-23.

The commands which Muḥammad received on these two occasions are recorded at the head of Chapters LXVI and LXVII.

To these orders the Prophet conformed and soon saw himself surrounded by converts, the number of whom rapidly increased. This caused much alarm amongst the aristocratic families and the wealthy merchants of Mecca, many of whom were related to Muḥammad. At first they made fun of the new Prophet, but when his success began to be established they became threatening. They ended by joining in an organized pursuit and persecution of those who had attached themselves to the new teaching.

This continued for twelve years, when conditions finally became intolerable for the Muḥammadans, who were obliged to seek shelter in Medina or elsewhere. The Prophet himself found it necessary to withdraw owing to repeated attempts on his life and to betake himself to Medina where, in A.D. 622, he definitely established himself. This was the beginning of the Muḥammadan era of the Hijra. Twelve years had already passed away since the coming of the revelation of Islām.

From being the spiritual leader of a tiny community of *ḥanīfs* in Mecca, Muḥammad became at Medina the religious and secular chief of the numerous emigrants who went with him into exile. The Medinese converts equally recognized him as such. He soon found himself, endowed with all the attributes of sovereignty, at the

INTRODUCTION

head of a State whose religious and civil law was supplied by the Qur'ān. Islām was rapidly becoming a political institution and the Apostle its sovereign pontiff and ruler. For the maintenance and further strengthening of Islām it was urgently necessary that this should be so.

Muḥammad's moral authority and his actual supremacy alike rested on God. His whole ascendancy over his followers depended upon the Revelations, an evident sign continually witnessing, in the eyes of his converts, to the living presence of God in the midst of the faithful. These Revelations were produced one after another, and often bore evidence to themselves by the way in which they met the exigencies of the moment, whilst at other times they offered the instruction or guidance needed by the growing community of the Believers.

Freed now from the ambushes and continual hostility of the Meccans, Muḥammad consolidated his position at Medina and openly extended his cause in the full light of day. Nevertheless he was obliged to meet and encounter the opposition of neighbouring Jewish tribes, whose enmity he was unable to conquer by persuasion. Savage conflicts eventually resulted which assured the triumph of the young Muḥammadan State, whose power was to extend in less than a century from the frontiers of China to the Pyrenees.

A short time before his death Muḥammad entered Mecca as conqueror. Its townsmen, generously treated by their victor, all embraced Islām. The temple of Abraham became the central shrine of pilgrimage for Muḥammadans. All Arabia fell into their power.

Muḥammad died in 632, at the age of sixty-one years,

INTRODUCTION

as the result of a poisoning crime, whose effects made themselves felt for a long time thereafter.

When he closed his eyes for the last time, his dying words were: 'With the Elect in the Heavens.'

Very many are the verses which implicitly place Muḥammad in the galaxy of the great saints of earth. One of these says that his being sent was a pure mercy for the whole universe, XXI. 107. Another declares that God and the angels continually bless him. And if it is true that there are also verses in which God pardons his sins, these are interpreted as merely venial lapses from the absolute ideal.

Placed thus in command of an enormous State, he had lived soberly and conducted himself as a modest citizen. The heritage which he left to his followers consisted in those moral gains which were destined to become the common property of all his disciples.

These requisitions were thought of as being the revival of ancient monotheism, supported on the Qur'ān, which served as the moral and legal foundation of the Muḥammadan State, and on the personal example of the Prophet, whose casual sayings were raised by posterity to the rank of fundamental traditions and fixed rules of life.

Already when death claimed him, his personal ascendancy and the veneration of the faithful for their Prophet had long passed all bounds. Grief was intense and consternation profound. To calm the terrors of the desperate crowds, their leaders were obliged to remind the people of a verse which commands men to see in Muḥammad merely a man and an Apostle, subject to death like themselves. Verses of this kind were in fact of great value

INTRODUCTION

from more than one point of view. It is a tendency of human nature to create its own idols for itself, and then to worship some one of these. Muḥammad would not have escaped the fate of being so worshipped if he had not repeatedly said in the Qur'ān that he was but a man, simply and solely, however specially he had been favoured by God.

The central force and driving power of Islām resides from the religious point of view in its dogmatic simplicity, and from the moral point of view in an idealism based on a constant realization of the actualities of life. Thanks to this it was able to consolidate and propagate itself without the help afforded by an ecclesiastical organization, and without depending on any doubtful or dispensable means in order to capture the popular imagination.

God, man, and the human conscience form, in their intimate relationship, a single strong and expansive force, capable of bringing rapidly to pass the birth of Islām, and its extension across the world, which world the Muḥammadans considered already marked out as their inheritance. Did not the Qur'ān, in fact, revive the ancient Biblical promise when it said: 'The earth shall be the portion of My faithful worshippers,' *xxi. 105*? The worshippers in question were in the eyes of Muḥammadans no other than the initiates of Islam, that is to say, men who had made their submission to God, who were enlightened by His Spirit, and were conscious that they bore the Lord within their breasts.

Expanding Islām gathered a swift and splendid harvest from the remnants of the old Oriental civilizations. A marvellous and colourful blossoming of new ideas

INTRODUCTION

introduced and accompanied the gestation and birth of an Islāmic civilization, which rapidly came into being and burst a way for itself into the very heart of Europe. The medieval period bears undeniable signs of this process.

The development of this fair civilization reached its limits in the thirteenth century. Asiatic invasions in the East submerged the fertile fields of the new culture. Irreparable destruction was the result of these. In the West the fall and end of the Arab empire in Spain dragged down with them and destroyed at the same time the luxuriant growth of letters, science, and the arts which had taken place under the aegis of the Crescent. The Muḥammadan world, divided into tiny States, was in addition shaken to its foundations by fratricidal competition and internecine strife. Schisms broke out. Muslim tore Muslim to pieces and decline and decay became general. The tares of ancient Oriental paganism grew up again and choked the wheat. Religion no longer succeeded in checking the growth of luxury and the decay of morals. Nay, it was itself changing from vital faith to mere empty formalism. Piety found itself supplanted by bigotry.

In this general atmosphere of failure and disintegration there came into being a new social element, the body of 'Ulamā or learned men who became a sort of clergy.* A kind of exaggerated traditionalism resulted from this movement. Little by little barriers were erected on every side to keep out anything fresh or vital. The regenerating spirit and the impulse toward research inherent in Islām were thus completely extinguished and it was not long before it took on an aspect of complete stagnation. The

* [But see foot-note to p. xxvii.—*Translator.*]

INTRODUCTION

nineteenth century, however, was to see this morbid state of affairs somewhat modified under the stimulus of the conquests effected by Western powers.

The Muḥammadan States of the Levant and the Eastern Mediterranean countries were the first to respond to this stimulus and to show signs of fresh life and activity. More recently still they began to take their own part in the movement toward Reformation.

Without having anything whatever essential in common with the waves of excitement which, in the sixteenth century, stirred the Apostles of Protestantism to join battle with Rome, this Islāmic renaissance was, in its own way, somewhat analogous. Republican Turkey took the initiative and abrogated the Caliphate, long thought of as the main support of theocratic principles and religious supremacy in the Muḥammadan State. In the same spirit it did away with the caste of the 'Ulamā, the organ and instrument of this quasi-ecclesiastic dominance. In order to root out the ultimate source of the theocracy, they closed the scholastic colleges and sealed up the **Tekke**, the seats of the religious orders, which had become very largely mere centres of reaction. The State, now declared to be purely secular, sequestrated their property in its own favour and extended its authority to cover the control of all religious institutions, whose function was henceforth limited exclusively to the conduct of worship and the celebration of ritual exercises. The Qur'ān, translated into Turkish, took on the character of nationalist literature.

Thus did the twentieth century begin to dawn in the world of Islām, so true is it that the march of human thought draws all things along in its train.

INTRODUCTION

'Read, for thy sublime Lord instructeth by means of the Pen and teacheth man that which he knew not aforetime,' so says the Qur'ān (xcvi. 3-5). Pens have always differed in kind and quality and it would appear that those of to-morrow do not desire to be moulded in the form of those of yesterday. A verse, lv. 22, tells us, in fact, that the divine will is continually at work in the world. In so saying it proclaims the law of unresting development. It is in vain that the horizon remains the same; each fresh dawn repaints it with its own special tints.

INDEX TO REFERENCES IN THE INTRODUCTION

<i>Note No.</i>	<i>Chapter and Verse of the Qur'ân</i>	<i>Note No.</i>	<i>Chapter and Verse</i>
45	LVII. 4	55	LVII. 4-21
"	LVIII. 7	56	XXXIII. 42-3
46	XIX. 96	57	XX. 50
"	II. 152	58	XII. 53
"	XI. 50	59	XXIV. 35
47	X. 25	60	XII. 53
"	XXXIX. 53	"	LXXV. 2
48	XV. 21	"	XCI. 7-8
"	II. 165	"	LXXXIX. 27
"	XVIII. 39	61	XXXVI. 36
49	LVII. 3	62	LXIV. 11
50	XXXVII. 96	63	III. 65-7
51	LV. 29	64	II. 62
52	VI. 103	"	V. 69
53	LVII. 3	65	XXX. 7
"	LXX. 4	"	LI. 20-1
54	XX. 14	66	XCVII. 1
"	LIX. 24	"	XLIV. 2
"	XXII. 8		

IN THE NAME OF GOD, WHO IS FULL OF LOVING-KINDNESS AND MERCIFUL

I

PRAISE be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, 1
He who is merciful and full of loving-kindness, 2
Who is Judge at the Judgement Day! 3
Thee alone do we adore, and of Thee alone do we ask
help. 4
Guide us in the Path of Safety and Well-Being, 5
In the Path of those on whom Thou didst heap Thy
favours, 6
Those who never fell into disgrace with Thee and who
never went astray. 7

II

THIS is the Book in which there is nothing uncertain. It
is the Guide of those who devote themselves to a life of
piety, 1-2

Who believe in Him who is Unknowable, who give
themselves up to prayer, and who support the poor from
the wealth with which We endow them, 3

Those who believe in the revelation sent down to Thee
from heaven, and in that which was sent down before Thee;
those finally who are persuaded of life to come. 4

These are they who are in the Way of their Lord.
Verily they are the Redeemed. 4

Yet there be those who say: 'We believe in God and in
the Last Day.' Nevertheless they are not true believers. 8

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

And when it is said to them: 'Believe in the manner of all other men,' they answer: 'Are we to believe as the baser sort do?' Verily it is they who are the baser sort, yet be they all unwitting of it. 13

Speak not lightly of the true, nor mock it to make it appear false. Wrest not the Truth when ye have come to know it. 42

Yield ye yourselves to prayer, give alms, and bow yourselves before God with those who bow themselves in like manner. 43

Whiles that ye exhort others to piety, will ye neglect your own salvation? Verily ye read the Book, is it that ye understand it not? 44

Implore Divine aid by prayer and by perseverance in well-doing, albeit that is hard to do, except for the lowly in heart, 45

For those namely who cherish the thought that they will one day appear before their Lord and return to His presence. 46

Fear ye the Day in which no soul of man will be able to support or stand sponsor for another, in which no intercession or recommendation will be accepted from any, in which evil-doers will be left without help or influence from any quarter. 48

Amongst the true believers and those who are Jews, Christians, or Sabaeans, whosoever believeth in God and in the Day of the last Judgement, and who doeth good, verily he shall find recompense at the feet of his Lord. For such there shall be no terror, neither any torment of suffering. 62

We abrogate no commandments, nor do We allow any to fall into oblivion, except it be to replace it by one better

SELECTED VERSES

than it or by one of equal value. Hath not the Almighty power over all things? 106

To God belong the East and the West. To whichever side ye may turn you, there His Presence riseth before you. He is the Illimitable, the All-Knowing. 115

Say ye: 'We believe in God and in that which He hath sent from on high, even as we believe in that which was sent to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the tribes of Israel, and as in like manner we believe in the revelations vouchsafed to Moses, to Jesus, and to the prophets by their Lord. We make no difference between any of these, and we ourselves are his faithful disciples.' 136

It is thus that we have made of you, O Musulmāns, a people destined to be mediators,¹ so that ye might bear witness before men concerning the truths of the Qur'ān, even as the Apostle Himself is witness of them before you. 143

And now let there be but one single line of advance in which we all share! It is God Himself who hath decided this for us. Forward then and perform your good works, and know ye of a surety that God will reunite you all at the Last Day, wheresoever ye may be. Of a surety all things depend upon God. 148

Invoke Me in prayer and I will bear you in remembrance. Render Me grace for grace, and shew not yourselves unmindful of My kindness. 152

O true believers, implore Divine aid by perseverance and by prayer. In very truth God doth sustain those who are constant in piety. 153

As for those who have fallen in the Way of God, say not of them that they are dead. Nay rather they live, but 'tis ye who lack understanding. 154

QUR'ANIC WISDOM

We are testing you all by fear and by hunger, by the loss of goods, of friends, or of harvests. Blessed are they who endure with patience, 155

And who say, whensoever troubles come upon them: 'All that we have and are belongeth to God. Verily it is He who is our Refuge.' 156

To such belongeth the blessing of their Lord and His Mercy. Such are they who follow His Way. 157

Your God is the one true God; there is no other God beside Him; He is the Kind and the Merciful One. 163

But amongst mankind there be those who worship beings other than God. They love such beings as men love God. Nevertheless those who believe in God, love him with a love which hath no likeness. If those who wander from God were but acquainted with the sufferings which await them, they would know that all power is in God, and that He punisheth with severity. 165

Verily piety consisteth not in turning the face toward the Sunrise or toward the Sunset. Truly pious is he who believeth in God, in the Day of the Last Judgement, in the angels, in the Scriptures, and in the Apostles; he who, for the love of God, giveth from what he hath to poor relatives, to orphans, to the sick, to needy travellers, and to those who ask for help; he who contributeth to the ransom of captives, observeth the times of prayer, and duly furnisheth his share of alms; he who keepeth faith when he hath promised; he finally who bravely beareth adversity and privations, and who standeth firm in time of danger. Such are the faithful² and such are the pious. 177

And there is life for you in the shadow of the penalty prescribed. 179

O true believers! Fasting is ordained for you as it was

SELECTED VERSES

ordained for those who came before you, so that ye may follow the commandments of God. 183

The days of fasting are exactly reckoned. He who is sick or on a journey, he shall fast afterward an equal number of days. Those who still break the rule of fasting without such reasons, they shall expiate their fault by feeding the poor. Whosoever shall be lavish in such expiation he shall have no other reward but a surplus of merit. Nevertheless it were better that ye should observe the fast. If ye but knew its reward! 184

And whensoever My servants shall ask thee concerning Me, say that I am close to them. I hear the prayers of those who supplicate Me. Let them then make their prayers to Me and let them believe in Me, so that they may attain to Wisdom. 186

Waste not your substance among yourselves in pursuit of vanities; neither offer ye bribes to the judge, so as to divert to yourselves the goods of others, since verily ye know the wickedness of such doings. 188

And join battle in the Way of the Lord with those who would oppose you, yet see that ye oppress them not in so doing. God loveth not the violent and overbearing. 190

Be generous with your gifts in the Way of God and run not wilfully the risk of perdition. Be ye open-handed and benevolent. God loveth those who do good. 195

Fulfil ye the duty of pilgrimage and visit Mecca in obedience to the command of God. 196

The pilgrimage is to be made during the months ordained for it. Let him who maketh the pilgrimage during this time remain chaste and unsullied, let him avoid all transgression and have no quarrels with any. Verily all the good deeds ye shall do will be known to God. Take

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

provision for your journey. Yet forsooth the best provision of all is piety. Hearken then to Me, O men of understanding! 197

Verily there be those who say: 'Lord, impart to us of this world's goods.' Such as these part with their birth-right in the life to come. 200

Others there be who say: 'O Lord, grant us a fair portion in this world and likewise a fair portion in the world to come, and preserve us from the suffering in the fire.' 201

Such shall inherit the portion which they shall deserve. And your God is a good paymaster. 202

They will ask thee concerning the giving of alms. Say thou to them: 'The best alms is that which ye bestow on your father and mother, on your relatives, on orphans, on the sick, and on poor travellers. And verily ye can do no good deed which is not known to your God.' 215

They will ask thee regarding wine and gambling. Say thou to them: 'In both these is great evil, yet moreover there is profit for men in both. Nevertheless the evil outweigheth the profit.' They will ask thee also about the amount which they ought to disburse in alms. Answer and say: 'Give of what ye have to spare.' It is thus that God explaineth His signs, so that ye may meditate on the things of this world and the next. 219

They will ask thee again about orphans. Say then: 'We must lighten their lot.' When ye meet with them and they with you, call ye to mind that they be your brethren. God knoweth the hearts of men and distinguisheth between the doer of good and the doer of evil.

He is able to afflict you if He will, for He is the All-Powerful, and He it is who judges. 220

Be not joined in marriage with idolatrous women, who

SELECTED VERSES

believe not. A believing slave-woman is better than a free-woman who is an idolater, even if such an one be more pleasing to you. Give not your daughters in marriage to idolaters who have not subscribed to the faith. A believing slave is better than a free man who is an unbeliever, even if such an one seemeth more pleasing to you. As for Thee, O prophet, proclaim Thou the gospel to those who believe. 221

Let your wives be to you for a fruitful field. Be ye joined to them in marriage³ with a view of offspring according to your desires, and act therein with piety and restraint. Have regard for the precepts of God and remember continually that ye shall one day appear before Him. 223

Swear no oaths which shall prevent you from good deeds, from following the commands of God, or from reconciling those who are at odds. God verily heareth and knoweth all things. 224

God will not hold you answerable for your failure to perform your oaths in such cases; rather will He call you to account for your feelings towards others. He Himself wipeth away our sins, and He is full of loving-kindness. 225

Observe the times of prayer, the noon prayer above all, and take your place before God with Love to Him in your hearts. 238

If some danger threaten you, then may ye adore your Maker upright on your feet or on horseback. Then afterward when ye shall again be in safety, worship God as He taught you to do when ye were yet in ignorance. 239

To him who offereth to God a loan without expectation of profit; verily to such a man will He render it again

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

manyfold. And God is able to cause decrease and to cause increase. It is to Him that ye must needs return in the end. 245

... God accordeth of His Empire to whomsoever He will. His power is far-reaching and He is wise. 247

... If God did not restrain the peoples, making use of some to control the others, the earth would soon be corrupted. But God is full of good-will towards all the world. 251

All these things are signs of the Divine Wisdom. We reveal them to thee in their full truth, for thou art without doubt one of the Apostles. 252

And amongst these Apostles, We have granted Our favour in varying degrees to one and to another. There have been those to whom God Himself hath spoken. Some of them He hath placed in a rank superior to that of others. To Jesus, son of Mary, We accorded Our signs and We sustained Him by the Holy Spirit. . . . 253

O true believers, relieve the poor from the good things which We have bestowed upon you, yea, before that Day shall come when there shall be no arranging of affairs, neither using of friendship, neither reliance on intercession. As for the impious, they are cruel and brutal. 254

God! There is no God but He, the All-Living, the Everywhere-Active. Weariness and slumber have no part in His existence. Every being celestial, even as every being terrestrial, lieth fast in His Hand. Who then would dare ever to intercede in His presence without permission from Himself? He knoweth all that men produce and all that they acquire. To nothing of His knowledge may they ever attain except what it may please Him to unveil to them. His Power embraceth all like the skies and the

SELECTED VERSES

earth. No virtue goeth from Him in His conserving of the same. And verily it is He, the Most High, the Sublime!

255

No use of force is permitted in matters of religion. Of its own nature Truth standeth clearly distinguished from error. He who hath turned away from false deities to believe in God, he indeed hath grasped an anchor solid and unbreakable. And God is He who understandeth all, who is acquainted with all things. 256

God is the Friend and Protector of those who believe that He leadeth them to the light from the shadow of death. 257

Those who spend their substance in the Way of God are like seed-corns which produce each seven ears, and on each ear a hundred grains. God rendereth to us in very truth manifold more than He requireth from us, for God is Himself Lavishness and Himself Wisdom. Those who disburse their riches in the Path of God, and who do never at all follow their gifts with complaints and reproaches, these shall find recompense in the bosom of their Lord. 262

A bluff word and forgiveness thereafter are better than an alms and hard treatment to follow. God is too rich and lavish, too kind-hearted and generous, to be pleased when ye give grudgingly without love in your hearts. 263

O ye true believers! Render not your alms vain by reproaches and brutalities, as he doth who doeth good for mere outward show and seeming, and believeth not in God nor in the Last Day. Such feigned benevolence is like unto a rocky hillside covered with a shallow sprinkling of soil. Cometh a landslide upon such a slope and there remaineth but the naked rock. Such men have in truth no

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

profit from their good deeds, for God guideth not the lives of the stiff-necked and recalcitrant. 264

And verily those who give largess from their substance for the satisfaction of God and for the strengthening of their faith are like unto an orchard planted on a sunny slope and watered abundantly by rain. It beareth double the tale of fruit. And if by chance the rain lacketh, there is always dew in plenty. God it is who willeth all that ye do. 265

O True Believers! Give alms of the best parts of your substance, and of what We cause you to garner from the earth. Give not to others that which is less good, such indeed as ye desire not for yourselves, or at the least give with closed eyes without distinction! Know ye that God is the All-Wealthy to whom all praises flow. 267

Satan it is who putteth in your hearts the fear of poverty and who inciteth you to avarice; but God promiseth you His Pity and His generous largess, and God is wise and His power far-reaching. 268

He bestoweth Wisdom on whomsoever He will. Whoever then possesseth Wisdom, possesseth a very good thing. Nevertheless, none but the intelligent appreciate this. 269

Of whatsoever kind be your alms, and whatever be your hidden desires, God knoweth both. From the evil-doer all help will be withdrawn. 270

Do ye shew kindness and do alms in the sight of all men? Verily ye are deserving of praise. Do ye do the same discreetly to succour the shame-faced poor in secret? That is far more meritorious. Such conduct cancelleth your sins. God knoweth well what ye do. 271

'Tis not in thy power to lead men where thou wilt.

SELECTED VERSES

God alone can guide whom He will. The kindnesses which ye do will return to you. Such deeds cannot but win for you the favour of God. And in truth ye shall make no sacrifice for which ye shall not be amply recompensed. 272

Therefore ye will lose nought by succouring the needy who vow themselves to God's service and who have no means of livelihood. Vain men believe such to be at ease because they make no complaint. But thou wilt know them by their downcast mien. They ask nothing from any man for fear of begging. Whatsoever good ye shall do to them, God will be aware of it. 273

Those who give alms, be it by day or by night, be it secretly or in public, they shall find recompense at the feet of God. They shall live safe from trouble and disquiet; sorrow shall flee from them. 274

As for those who make their living by usury, they shall rise again on the Resurrection Day in the guise of men soiled by contact with Satan. Because they would fain pretend that usury is but a form of trade. Howbeit we know that God hath permitted trade and commerce, but hath forbidden usury. Whosoever then shall cease from this iniquity, so soon as these commands come to him from his Lord, verily he shall cause his past deeds to be forgotten, and his lot shall be safe in the hands of God. Howbeit those who begin again to extract usury, they shall be punished in hell-fire. They shall remain there for a time whose end appeareth not. 275

God reproveth usury and increaseth the reward of the charitable. God hateth equally him who transgresseth in secret. 276

Those who believe and do good deeds, who observe

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

the times of prayer and duly render yearly alms, such shall have recompense from the hands of their Lord. For them shall there be neither terror nor affliction. 277

All that is in heaven or on earth belongeth unto God. *Whether ye display your actions or whether ye hide them, God will render you your deserts. With His favour will He heap up the platter of whom He will, and to whom He will He will deal out chastisement. . . .* 284

The Prophet believeth in all that was revealed to him by his Lord, and the faithful believe one and all in God, in His angels, His Scriptures, and His Apostles. They say: 'We make no distinction between His Apostles and we have heard and obeyed. O our Lord, we implore Thy pity! Thou verily art our Refuge!' 285

God giveth to no soul a burden heavier than it can bear. All that it acquireth shall be at its disposal, and the sins it committeth shall be held against it. 286

Overwhelm us not, O our Lord, under the weight of sins committed in ignorance or in heedlessness. Crush us not under a heavy burden, as Thou didst o'erload those who came before us. Lord, ask not from us that for which we are not able. Grant Thou indulgence to our faults and accord us Thy Grace and Thy Pity. Thou verily art our Ruler and Master. Be Thou our present Help against those who deny Thee. 287

III

GOD! There is no God but He, the Ever-Living, Who liveth in all things! 1

'Tis He who hath sent the Book. It is found in form as verses which make up the Law. These are the foundations

SELECTED VERSES

of the Book. Others there be which are parables. Those who have wayward and vacillating hearts love allegories; so that they may lead mankind into error by false interpretations. God only, and men enlightened by wisdom, are able to interpret.⁴ Such declare: 'We believe in the Book. All that it containeth cometh from our Lord.' Yet it is only men of true understanding who think thus and who say: 2

'O our Lord, let not our hearts wander far from Thee, after Thou hast given us guidance. Accord us Thy favour. Thou art the supreme Dispenser of all Grace. 8

'O Lord! Thou wilt reassemble the whole of mankind on that Day of whose coming there is no shadow of doubt. Of a truth God never faileth in what He hath promised.' 9

For men hath God brought into being the allure and the affection of women, as also therewith the desire of offspring. Joyance in weighty hoards of gold and silver, delight in swift steeds, pleasure in the possession of herds of cattle and of spreading cornfields and orchards—these all belong to the gifts of His bounty. Yet be these all but radiant passing vanities. With God Himself is our sure and lovely abiding-place. 14

Say then: 'Let me tell you of things better than all these! For those who shall give themselves to the pious life, are prepared in the presence of their Lord fair gardens where limpid waters flow. Youth everlasting, brides gentle and faithful, and the approval of their Lord, all these await them. For God is ever mindful of those who serve Him with a whole heart.' 15

Who implore Him and say: 'Lord, we have believed in Thee; wipe out our sins and preserve us from the tortures of hell-fire.' 16

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Such are of those who persevere in the Good Way, who are faithful to their covenant with God, who obey Him and who are charitable. Such are of those who from early dawn daily beg for Grace and for Pity. 17

God is witness that there is no God but Himself. Angels also and just men enlightened acknowledge that there is no God but He, the Venerated and the Wise. 18

The True Faith, as before God, is the Faith of Islām. 19

Say thou then: 'O God, dispenser of good things, Thou accordedst Thy power to him who pleaseth Thee, and thou takest it away from whom Thou wilt; Thou raisest up whom Thou wilt, and castest down whom Thou wilt. All good resteth in Thy hands, and Thou hast power over all things. 26

'Thou makest night to follow day and day to follow night. Thou causest life to be born from death, and makest death to rise from life. Thou overwhelmest those whom Thou dost favour with boons unnumbered.' 27

The Day will surely come when every soul will see placed before it again the good which it hath done, and will see gathered once more all the evil which it hath spread in the earth. If it be so that it seeth evil, it will wish that an abyss should separate it from its evil deeds. God would wish to preserve you from this, for He is compassionate toward His creatures. 30

Say to them: 'If ye love God, follow my counsels. Then He will love you and ye shall have your sins wiped away, for He is Indulgent and full of loving-kindness.' 31

Say again: 'Obey God and the Prophets.' And if ye turn you away from this, then know of a surety that God loveth not the stiff-necked and obstinate.' 32

SELECTED VERSES

Howbeit those who believe and do good, they shall be amply recompensed. God loveth not evil-doers. 57

O People of the Law! What profiteth it to dispute concerning Abraham? Neither Law nor Gospel appeared till long after *his* time. Comprehend ye not this? 65

Abraham verily was neither Jew nor Christian; rather was he a true believer, a Muslim, keeping the pure worship of God alone, with no mixture of any heathen rite or belief. 67

Those then who are the closest to Abraham and his seed in very truth are those who walk in his footsteps. Such are the Prophet himself and those who believe as he doth. Know ye that God is the friend of the true believers. 68

Amongst those who have received the Scriptures, there are those to whom thou mayest safely entrust a whole talent of money and they will render it to thee whole and untouched. There are also, however, others of a different sort who will not return to thee a deposit of a single dinar, unless thou constrain them by force. They act thus because they say: 'We have no obligation toward the Gentiles.' In so doing they make God a liar, and they know that they do so. 75

Yea, verily! He who is faithful to his promises and followeth the true Way, he shall know of a truth that God loveth those who respect His commandments. 76

It cannot be that God should honour any man with His Word and that He should accord such an one Wisdom and Prophecy, to the end that he might say to mankind: 'Worship me together with God as His equal.' Nay, one so honoured will rather say: 'Continue to acknowledge God as the Scriptures teach you to do, and in such manner as ye have been instructed.' 79

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

He will never command you to adopt angels and prophets again as patrons. How then should He order you to become unbelievers again after ye have once become true Muslims? 80

Say then: 'We believe in God, and in that which hath been sent to us, just as we do in that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, and the tribes of Israel; we believe also in that which was revealed to Moses, to Jesus, and to the other Prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction between any of these, we are people wholly surrendered to God.' 84

Whosoever followeth any faith other than Islām, let him know of a surety that such a faith will never be pleasing to God. Such a man will be a castaway in the world to come. But those who return to the Lord, repentant and submissive, and who give themselves up to good actions, they shall find God indulgent, full of sympathy and loving-kindness. 85

Ye will never attain to perfect piety, so long as ye do not give alms from that which ye yourselves hold dear as a sacrifice to God. And whatsoever of largess ye give, verily it is all known of God. 92

Hold fast with all your strength the rope which God holdeth out to you, and loose it not. Bethink ye of the blessings which God heapeth upon you. 103

Ye are the best people in the world, since ye commend what is profitable, forbid what is harmful, and remain united in the faith which ye all have in God. 110

Amongst the people of the Scripture, there are those whose heart is right and true, and who pass their nights in reciting the teachings of God, and in adoring Him, prostrating themselves before Him. 113

SELECTED VERSES

They believe in God and in the Last Day. They ordain what is good and forbid what is evil. They compete amongst themselves as to which of them shall excel in good works; in short, they are righteous and full of virtue. 114

Ye shall do no good work in vain, nor shall ye be frustrated in your well-doing. God knoweth those who fear to transgress His precepts and are anxious lest His commands be neglected. 115

O true believers, do not practise usury, demanding double what ye lend and yet again double. Fear God and ye shall rejoice in happiness. 130

Fear the fire which threateneth those who have not the true faith. Obey God and the Prophet and look with sure confidence for Mercy and Forgiveness. 131

Strive to deserve the Grace of your Lord and to assure yourselves of Paradise, Paradise which embraceth both the heavens and the earth. For Paradise is a dwelling promised to the faithful. 132

Those who give alms alike in times of ease and times of stress; those who have learned to repress their wrath and to forgive their fellow men; such as act kindly are beloved of God. 133

There be those who take refuge in God, what time they be at fault and wrong themselves, and they repent them swiftly of their errors. If then they be not stiff-necked, and if they acknowledge their fault, who should pardon them, if not God? 135

Such shall partake the forgiveness and blessing of their Lord and shall dwell for ever in celestial meadows through which bright rivers run. These shall enjoy the recompense of fair deeds. 136

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Be strong and of a good courage and despair not. Faith giveth the victory and overcometh all. 139

Muḥammad is but an Apostle, as so many were before him. If he should die or be slain, would ye then return to your former errors? He who turneth back along the road by which he hath come harmeth God in no whit in so doing. Yet will God amply recompense those who be loyal and acknowledge His blessings bestowed. 144

None dieth except God so ordaineth, according to the set time. To him who desireth this world's goods, verily We will accord the same. And to him who desireth the blessings of the world to come, to him likewise We will grant according to his desire. We recompense all who show their gratitude and make proof of their loyalty.

145

How many prophets have striven against tens of thousands in the Way of God, and were not discouraged by defeats! They shewed no weakness, they fainted not at all, nor ever let themselves be beaten down. Of a truth God loveth such as are stout-hearted and of good courage.

146

Moreover, their speech consisteth only in saying: 'Lord, pardon thou our sins and our omissions, strengthen thou our footsteps, and grant us thy help against the unbelievers and the heathen.' 147

Verily God bestoweth upon them recompense in this world and a fair heritage in the world to come, for God loveth those who give themselves up to good deeds.

148

O true believers, if ye lend an ear to the infidels they will cause you to return to your evil ways. Ye will fall again into perdition. 149

SELECTED VERSES

Bethink ye yourselves that God is your Lord, and that He is the best of guards and of guides. 150

... Say then: 'God disposeth all, even as all dependeth on Him.' 154

If ye be slain in the path of God, or if ye should die, then in sooth the Indulgence and the Mercy of God are yours. That profiteth more than all the goods which ye lay up for yourselves here on earth. 157

And if God be your helper, then are ye more than conquerors. 160

Think not that those who fall in the battle for God are dead. They live in the presence of their Lord and rejoice in His abundance. 169

In truth ye be tempted and tried full oft in your goods and in your own selves. Ye suffer hardships both from the idolaters and from those who received the Scriptures before you. Yea, ye endure suffering. But if ye have patience and fear to break the commandments of God, ye shall know that therein lieth the chief of treasures. 186

Forget not that the kingdom of heaven and of earth belongeth to God, and that He hath power over all. 189

Whosoever meditateth of God, when he standeth, and when he sitteth, and when he layeth him down, and reflecteth on the creation of the heavens and of the earth, saying: 'O Lord! Thou hast not created all these things in vain. Glory to Thee in the highest! Preserve us from all evil and suffering, 191

'O Lord! We have hearkened unto him who exhorted us to belief in God, and verily we have believed. O Lord, pardon then our faults, blot out our iniquities, and cause thou that we die in the fellowship of just men made perfect, 190

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

'O Lord! Grant us that which Thou didst promise by the mouth of Thine apostles. Afflict us not in the Day of Resurrection. Thou art ever faithful Who promisedst.'

192

All such shall find their prayers heard by their Lord, and He shall say to them: 'Not one of your good works shall return to you void. Whosoever ye be, man or woman, issue of one another, 193

'I will blot out the sins of those who shall have abandoned their own hearthstones or been driven away from them; of those who shall have suffered for My sake, or who shall fight and die in My Way. I will lead them by the hand into gardens of pure delight, where streams flow fresh and clear.' 194

O true believers, stand fast, quit you like men and faint not. Put ye your trust in God and fear to transgress His commandments; thus may ye attain to piety. 200

IV

O YE sons of men, follow the Way of your Lord, who created you all from one single person, and who likewise created from that person a woman as companion for him. What a vast host of men and women He hath caused to come into being as descendants of these two! Have respect for the precepts of God, in whose name ye ask help and protection from others. Let your charity be shewn to all men. Know ye that God seeth all that ye do! 1

Restore to orphans, when they reach their majority, all the property which pertaineth to them. Let not good be exchanged for evil, in that ye consume their heritage

SELECTED VERSES

and add it to your own property. In so doing ye commit a deadly sin. 2

Enter not into marriage with more women than ye are able to support. Let two, three, or four suffice you.⁵ And if ye fear lest ye be not able to observe equity of treatment, then espouse but a single wife. 3

Suffer not the incapable and foolish to have control over the property which God accordeth to men for their support. For such make ye daily provision only, furnish them with clothing, and speak ever honourably and fairly with them. 5

Those who devour the inheritance of orphans are introducing fire into their own bowels. By this fire they will one day themselves be consumed. 10~

The promise of pardon is only for those who sin in ignorance and repent forthwith. It is such alone whom God pardoneth; God knoweth well what He doeth. 17

Repentance availeth nought to those who continue in the evil way until death surpriseth them, and who say thereupon: 'Now verily I repent me.' In truth they shall be all one with those who die impenitent. For such We have in store chastisements fraught with wailing and gnashing of teeth. 18

O true believers! Ye are not permitted to cast out a woman like some outworn chattel, and to send her away with what little ye may choose to give her, when there is no charge proven against her. Ye must needs provide for her support. That pleaseth you not, mayhap, but that which seemeth distasteful to you, God often maketh profitable for you. 19

God willeth to lighten your burdens, for man is created weak and infirm of purpose. 28

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

O true believers! Waste not your substance unlawfully amongst yourselves. Let your aim be the mutual profit of all. Do nothing which bringeth the loss of your souls. God desireth to keep you from evil. 29

Regard not with the eye of envy the gifts which God giveth to some in more abundance than to others. Whether ye be men or women, each one of you will receive that which is your proper portion. Ask rather from God that He will grant you the like favour as to others, for He knoweth all your concerns. 32

Worship God and associate no other being with Him in your worship. Be generous to your parents and relatives, to poor orphans, to neighbours whether they be related to you or not; use the same kindness to your fellow townsmen, to needy travellers, and to your servants. God loveth not him who thinketh only of himself, 36

Nor yet doth He regard those who are miserly and who stir up others to greed and cupidity, concealing jealously that which God hath bestowed on them, to the end that it be not known. For such shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 37

Neither yet loveth He those who do alms to be seen of men, and who believe not in God and in the Last Day. Whosoever hath Satan as his fellow, hath an evil companion. 38

O true believers! Go not up to prayer when ye are full of new wine. Tarry rather that ye may know to understand what ye say. . . . 43

God commandeth you to render up to its owner the deposit confided to you, and whensoever ye be on the judgement seat He willeth that ye judge your fellows with

SELECTED VERSES

equity. God enjoineeth just and righteous dealing upon you. He heareth and seeth all. 58

O true believers, obey God, obey the Apostle and those who exercise authority over you. If ye have ground for complaint, bring your differences before God and before the Apostle, since ye believe in God and in the Day of the Last Judgement. This is the best and the best way for you. 59

Why, then, will ye not contend in the path of your Lord, what time the infirm, men, women, and children, cry out aloud: 'O Lord, deliver us who dwell in this city from those in it who oppress us, and send us a defender who shall come to us from Thee. Grant us Thy help and Thy protection.' 75

The good which cometh to thee cometh from God, and the evil which smiteth thee is of thine own causing. 79

Fight thou, O Prophet, in the path of God, and bear thine own self the heavier burdens—lade them not upon others. Encourage the believers to defend themselves. God is able to make of no avail the violence of the unbelievers. He is stronger than they be, and His harshness exceedeth theirs. 84

He who willeth the good of others shall partake that good, and in like manner he who willeth evil shall share that evil. Behold, nought is hidden from the sight of God! 85

If one salute you, return his salute with added honour and courtesy, giving salutation for salutation. God taketh account of all that ye do. 86

He who shall slay a believer with plan and intent, he shall have hell for his heritage: he shall be there eternally. In His wrath against such an one, God will curse him and appoint for him a terrible punishment. 93

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Verily whosoever doeth evil or acteth iniquitously toward his own soul, if he shall take refuge thereafter in the Divine Mercy, he shall find God ever full of gentleness and loving-kindness. 110

He who committeth a fault or sinneth a sin, and afterward causeth an innocent person to be charged therewith, he ladeth upon himself the burden of a hateful calumny and committeth therein a weighty and manifest transgression. 112

Those who do good deeds and are true believers, be they men or women, shall be the guests of Paradise. They shall come short in nothing of the blessings promised, nay, not so much as a single straw. 124

To God belong the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. It sufficeth us that God should be our Protector. 132

If He willed it, He would sweep you away, O mankind, and would replace you by others than you. God hath power to perform what He will. 133

God loveth not that ye should make evil known, least of all the evil which ye yourselves have suffered. God heareth and knoweth all. 148

O mankind! The Prophet hath come to bring you the Truth from your Lord. Have faith in Him, and it shall be well with you. But if rather ye remain unbelieving, the consequences shall rest on you alone. Your lack of faith hurteth not God, seeing his wealth embraceth all that is in the heavens and on the earth. He giveth judgement with full knowledge of the cause. 170

O people of the Book! Make no vain boasting in your worship, and speak not of God but in the speech of truth. Jesus the Christ, the son of Mary, was in very

SELECTED VERSES

sooth a Messenger of God and God's word born of Mary. He was a Spirit sent from God.⁶ Believe then in God and in His Messengers. Speak not of a trinity. Say no more of this, so will it avail you better; God is without doubt the one and only God. He is too exalted to have a son after the manner of men. Moreover to Him belongeth all that is in the heavens and on the earth. Let this witness regarding God suffice you. 171

O mankind! Behold, here is a writing which cometh to you from your Lord! We cause it to come down to you as a burning and a shining light. 174

... **L**END ye your aid when there is a question of works of piety, but give it not in the service of sin and iniquity. 2

... This day I have made your path sure and certain and therewith have I crowned the benefits which I have accorded you. It hath pleased Me to bestow Islām upon you as your Religion. . . . 3

Henceforth it is permitted you to enjoy all good things. The food eaten by those who had the Scriptures before you is proper for you also, as yours is likewise for them. Ye may espouse the pure and chaste daughters of true believers and of those who possessed the Scriptures before ye did, provided that ye hand over their dowries to them and make all proper settlements. Live with them in decency and continence, without debauch or concubinage. He who betrayeth his own pledged word will lose the fruit of his good works, and in the next world he will be one of the unhappy. 5

O true believers! Whosoever ye proceed to prayer

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

wash your faces and your arms up to the elbows, massage your heads and also your feet as far as the ankles, and after union in marriage purify yourselves by bathing⁷ the whole body. . . . 6

O ye who believe! Be just and sincere in what ye do for God, and be ye witnesses of the truth. Let not anger or envy turn your hearts and lips from that which is right. Judge righteous judgement, for piety demandeth this from you. Fear lest ye transgress the commandments of God and tremble before Him. Know ye that God is well aware of all that ye do. 8

The promises of God are for such as believe and do good deeds. With confidence they await His Mercy, and sublime recompense shall rejoice their hearts in due season. 9

Tell them, word by word as it is written, the story of the two sons of Adam, who presented their offerings to God. The sacrifice of one was accepted whilst that of the other was not. Then said the second to his brother: 'I am about to slay thee.' 'God', replied the first, 'receiveth only the offerings of such as observe his precepts, 27

'And further, if thou shalt put forth thine hand to slay me, yet I will by no means put forth mine own against thee to take away thy life; for I fear God, the Lord of the worlds.' 28

He who slayeth one who hath not committed murder, nor hath brought any trouble into the world, he is as guilty as if he killed the whole human race. And he who saveth a soul accomplisheth a deed as meritorious as if he had saved all humanity. 32

O true believers! Fear lest ye transgress the precepts of God and strive to keep open for yourselves a way of

SELECTED VERSES

approach to Him. Quit you like men to march in His way, so may ye join the host of the Redeemed. 35

... Let your emulation be in well-doing, and in that be foremost, surpassing all others. 48

Amongst the believers, whether Jews, Sabaeans, or Christians, those who have faith in God and the Last Day and who practise good deeds, such shall find shelter from fear and terror. They shall suffer no affliction. 69

Those who say: 'God is but a part of the Trinity,'⁸ when in truth there is but one God alone who is all Divinity, such sin against the Truth in very deed. Those who persist in such errors shall be subjected to dreadful torments. 73

Will they not then return to the Lord and shew themselves repentant? For God is pitiful and kind and full of tender mercy! 74

O true believers! Refuse not the good things which God alloweth you, yet use them in moderation and abuse them not. God willeth that ye use moderation in all things. 87

He will not exact reckoning for your unconsidered oaths, but He will demand that ye perform your serious engagements in full tale. If ye violate such solemn promises, ye must expiate your sin by feeding ten poor persons as amply as ye would your own household; or ye may furnish the same ten with raiment, or ye may set free a slave. He who hath no means for such expiation must fast for ten days. Such is the expiation fixed for the violation of an oath. Keep your vows and fulfil your promises. Thus doth God make manifest His signs, to the end that ye may observe and obey Him. 89

O true believers! Wine-parties, gambling, and games

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

of chance, fetish worship, and the casting of lots with arrows, all these are abominations of Satan. Withdraw from such and remain clean of heart and of mind. 90

Satan verily desireth to drive you to enmity and hatred, by means of wine and high play. He would fain estrange you from God and from worship. Will ye not make an end of all that? 91

Obeys God, obeys the Prophet, and put no trust in your own understanding. If ye continue in your former ways, then know that Our Messenger hath delivered his own soul in giving clear warning. 92

Say then: 'Evil and good are not of the same sort, notwithstanding that the overflowing of evil maketh thee astonished.' O men of wisdom and understanding, fear to transgress the commandments of God if ye would be of the host of the Redeemed. 100

O true believers! Ask not concerning secret things which would be dreadful to you if they were revealed. . . .
101

VI

PRAISE be to Him who created the heavens and the earth, who established the darkness and the light. Yet do miscreant fools make other beings His equals! 1

He it is Who created you from Mud and Clay; he giveth a respite and fixeth a term for your days. Yet do ye still doubt, O ye of little faith! 2

He is God in the heavens and on the earth. He knoweth that which ye hide and that which ye display. He knoweth likewise what ye acquire for yourselves of good and of evil. 3

If they should ask thee: 'To whom belongeth all that

SELECTED VERSES

is in the heavens and on the earth?' Then shalt thou tell them that all belongeth to God who hath pledged Himself to Mercy. He will surely gather you all at the Resurrection Day. Know this of a surety. Such as have no faith, these are they who lose their own souls. 12

If God tempt thee and try thee with evil and misfortune, know that He alone is thy Deliverer from these. And if He grant thee the favour of His blessing, verily it is because all stands in His power to give or to withhold. 17

His power is absolute over His creatures. He is Wisdom, and He is Understanding. 18

There are no beings moving on earth, neither birds carried on wings through the air, but that they also are persons like unto yourselves.⁹ We are ever mindful of Our creation—nothing is forgotten. At the end they shall all appear before their Lord. 38

Say: 'I do not pretend to possess the treasures of God, nor to know hidden mysteries. Neither do I say to you "I am an angel." I do but follow the Revelation sent down to me.' Say thou to them: 'Are the blind equal to those who have sight? What think ye?' 50

It is He who holdeth the keys of the Mystery. He alone knoweth it. He knoweth also what is on the earth or at the bottom of the sea. Not a leaf falleth without his knowledge. Not one grain in the sombre depths of the earth, not one blade of grass, green or withered, on its surface, which is not written in the Open Book. 59

Turn thee away from those whose religion is to them as a game or a vain show. They are blinded by the life of the world that now is. Let them know then that in the evil actions of the soul resideth her evident perdition, and

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

there is neither protector nor intercessor for her, save only God alone. 70

... His Word is Truth. 73

It is God who splitteth the seed-corn and maketh it to sprout within the bosom of the earth, who transformeth the dead into the living, and maketh the living to die. Such is God Almighty. Yet ye turn you away from Him! 95

No yearnings of ours have power to reach Him, nor can we see Him with our eyes; yet doth He know all our yearnings, and is acquainted with our every look toward Him. He is the Discerner of hearts, the Instructed in the thoughts of men. 103

The Word of thy Lord is complete from of old, as in the truths which it proclaimeth, so in the morals which it preacheth. His Words must needs be accomplished and in nothing will they be altered.¹⁰ Know ye that He heareth and comprehendeth all. 115

Abstain from foulness and evil in your deeds and in your thoughts, for they who sow the seeds of sin shall reap the harvest of suffering. 120

Keep back thine hand from the substance of the orphan and touch it not save in the way of justice and righteous dealing, until the day when he shall become a man. Let thy measure be overflowing and let thy weights be full value. We exact from none more than he is able to give. Therefore when ye invest or apportion property be sincere, even if it be against your near kindred. Be faithful to your sworn oaths. God commandeth this. Forget not His command, but bear it ever in your hearts. 152

To him who doeth good, render his good tenfold. He who doeth evil, let him be punished only in the measure

SELECTED VERSES

in which he hath transgressed. Above all, do violence to no man! 160

Say thou: 'God hath guided me in the right road, that of the first and the true Faith, the Faith of Abraham, who was pious and who worshipped not idols.' 161

Say again: 'My worship, my offerings, my life, and my death, are vowed to God, the Lord of the worlds.' 162

In truth it is He who hath established you on earth in place of those who were your forerunners. He hath set some of you above others to prove you and try you by means of that which He bestoweth on you. And thy Lord is sure and certain in what he doeth, and changeth not from what He hath promised, howsoever he be merciful and full of loving-kindness. 165

VII

O YE children of Adam! We have devised for you garments to cover your nakedness, and have bestowed raiment upon you. Nevertheless piety is the most sumptuous of all garments. Such are the statutes and teachings of God. Let your meditation be on these. 26

O ye children of Adam! Adorn yourselves with fair raiment when ye go forth to the Mosque, eat ye and drink, yet in all moderation. God loveth not gluttonous men and wine-bibbers. 31

Say to them: 'God verily hath forbidden evil deeds whether manifest or hidden, and all sin and iniquity.' 32

For every one his end is fixed and determined. When that end cometh, then may no one either hold him back, or push him on, by so much as the twinkling of an eye. 34

Implore aid from thy Lord with fear and with hope.

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

His Grace is nigh unto those who give themselves to well-doing. 55

Moses said unto his people: 'Implore God for His aid and stand fast; quit ye like men. The earth belongeth to God. He maketh to inherit it whom He will among His servants. For those who follow His commandments He prepareth a fair and joyful ending.' 128

Say thou: 'O mankind, I am the Messenger of God for you all, the Messenger of that God to whom belongeth the heavens and the earth. There is no God but He. He causeth men to live and to die. Believe then in this God and in His Messenger, in the unlettered Prophet who believeth in God and in His words. Follow ye him so that ye may walk in the right path.' 158

Would that ye but knew how much more precious is the life to come for those who conform to the Book and fulfil the times of prayer! By no means will We permit such as are converted to lack their due reward. 170

And when God drew their children forth from mankind in birth he caused each to become a witness against himself, in that he asked of each in turn: 'Am I not your Lord?' Each replied: 'Yea, we bear witness to that.' This was caused to happen so that ye might not say at the Day of the Last Judgement: 'We knew nothing about it.' 172

To God appertain the fairest and loveliest attributes. Invoke Him by the names of these and avoid the company of those who turn themselves away therefrom. They shall encounter a day which they have fully deserved. 180

Amongst the people whom We have created there are those who follow the straight road and who are just and good. 181

SELECTED VERSES

As for those who treat Our signs as lies and deceptions,
We come near to them slowly and surely at their end,¹¹
by ways of which they are ignorant. 182

They will ask thee when this moment will come. Say:
'The knowledge of that day and hour is reserved for God
alone. No man knoweth it nor is able to reveal it, except
God himself. Verily it hangeth in the unknown above
the heavens and the earth. Of a sudden it shall be re-
leased, when no man expecteth. . . .' 187

Say thou: 'I have no power over myself, neither in
good nor in evil. All that cometh to me is as God decreeth.
If I knew what is hidden from me, I should be more eager
in well-doing, and naught of evil would come near me.
Howbeit now I am but a watchman giving warning of
what he seeth, a messenger of joyous tidings for those
who believe.' 188

'My protector is God, He hath caused the Book to
descend from heaven and He sustaineth the upright in
heart. 196

'Moreover, those beings whom ye worship alongside
with, and apart from, God, can be of no help to you,
since verily they have no strength to help themselves.' 197

When thou invitest them to walk in the true Way,
they neither hearken nor understand. Thou feelest in
thyself that they regard thee with uncomprehending
eyes. 198

Yet be thou indulgent to them, cease not to preach
what is good, and give no heed to the ignorant and
foolish. 199

If the Tempter cometh to trouble thee, seek refuge and
shelter with God. Of a sooth He is The One who com-
prehendeth and knoweth all. 200

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

As for those who fear lest they fall into sin, when they be tempted of Satan, let them cry on God for help, that they may be delivered in the hour of evil. 201

And whensoever thou hearest the Qur'ān recited, listen to it in silence so that thou may'st deserve the Mercy of God. And invoke thy Lord in thy heart, humbly imploring Him, without lifting up thy voice in speech. Call upon Him at noon and at eve, and be not neglectful. 204

Those who surround thy Lord¹² in His immediate presence do not shew themselves haughty before Him in their adoration. Rather do they celebrate His praises and prostrate themselves at His feet. 205

VIII

TRUE believers are those whose hearts thrill with joy when we call upon God in prayer, those whose faith groweth strong and radiant as we recite verses of the Scripture, those who resign their destiny into the hands of the Lord and rest their faith on Him. 2

O true believers! Respond to the voice of God and of His Prophet, when they call you to life eternal and everlasting, and know ye of a certainty that God is in the inmost parts of a man, in his very heart, and that man will one Day appear before Him. 24

Know that your wealth and your children are temptations to you, and that with God alone do we find satisfying recompense, gracious and sublime. 28

God depriveth not men of His benefits until they cherish evil designs. God comprehendeth and knoweth all things. 53

SELECTED VERSES

O Prophet! Say to the prisoners who have fallen into your hands: 'If God seeth that ye cherish good designs, and generous feelings, then will He bestow upon you gifts far more precious than those of which ye have been deprived, and He will grant you the gift of His Grace, for He is the Merciful One, who pardoneth all our transgressions.' 70

IX

TRUE believers, whether men or women, are friends of one another; they all preach mutual well-doing and deplore and forbid evil; they observe the times of prayer, pay their yearly portion of alms, and obey the commandments of God given through His Apostle. God will crown their lives with His Grace. Verily He is the All-Powerful, the All-Wise. 71

God hath promised to true believers, both men and women, gardens where sweet rivers of water flow, and where they shall dwell for ever. Fair mansions await them in the orchards of Eden. But fairer far than all will be the good pleasure and loving-kindness of God. That will be joy without measure and happiness complete. 72

To God belongeth the Lordship of the heavens and of the earth. With him are the keys of life and of death. There is neither friend nor protector beside Him. 116

To you hath come a Prophet from among your own people. Your transgressions weigh heavy on his heart. All his desire is to see you true believers. He is full of care and of pity for you. 128

If they turn away from thee, then say: 'God is sufficient for me. There is no God but He. In Him do I take refuge. He is the Lord of all that is — His Empire is far-flung.' 139

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

X

EARTHLY life is like unto the rain which We cause to come down from the sky. It is absorbed by the plants of the field, whence cometh the sustenance of men and of beasts. The earth, when it is full of moisture, sheweth itself gay in varied raiment. The owners of the fields think that they themselves have brought this to pass. Nay rather, it is Our interventions at night or during the day-time which produce the crops, still unshewing at dawn or eve. Therein are manifest signs for those whose hearts are touched and whose eyes are opened. 24

God, moreover, inviteth you to the dwelling of peace. He directeth whom He will toward the true path. 25

To those who do good, their good shall return again with interest. No blackness nor shame shall tinge their faces with gloom. Such are the companions of Paradise. There shall they dwell for ever and for aye. 26

At the Judgement Day every soul shall be confronted with the deeds it hath committed and shall be brought face to face with God, the one true Master. The false gods which they invented for themselves shall be blotted out. 30

God acteth not unjustly toward men, it is men who are unjust to one another. 44

On the Day of Resurrection they will appear as if interred but one hour before. They will recognize one another. They who beforetime treated the idea of appearance before God as a falsehood and a lie shall know then that they went deeply astray in so doing. 45

On that Day every soul which hath transgressed

SELECTED VERSES

and done evil will be fain to redeem itself at the price of all the riches of the earth, if it were possessed of them. 54

Say thou to them: 'O men, if ye have doubts concerning my Religion, know that I by no means adore at all those beings whom ye adore alongside of God and apart from Him. I adore God only, He who will decree your final end. I am commanded to be of those who believe; 104

'To lift my forehead toward the true faith, to be pious, and not to be of those who associate other beings with God in their worship.' 105

Call not in your worship, side by side with God, upon that which can neither help nor hurt you. If ye do this, ye will be of those who sin against their own souls. 106

If some evil afflict thee, none other than God can deliver thee. If He send thee some good, then none can deprive thee of His Grace. He extendeth it to whom He will among His servants. He is slow to anger and plentiful in mercy. 107

Say then: 'O mankind! Truth hath come to you from your Lord. Whosoever will let himself be guided, will do it to his own good; whosoever will follow error will wander away to the harm of his own soul. It is impossible for me to save you from such a fate.' 108

As for thee, O Muḥammad, follow the Revelations which have been made to thee, and await with patience God's appointed time when He shall pronounce His sentence. He is the best of judges. 109

XI

Ask Mercy of your Lord and thereafter return unto Him. He will heap His favours upon you until the appointed time. He accordeth His Grace to those who are worthy of it. But if ye turn yourselves away, I fear for you an evil fate in the Great Day to come. 3

If we allow man to taste our benefits and after deprive him of the same, then he is despairing and lacketh gratitude. 9

But if rather we make him taste of our goodness after he hath been holden in adversity, he sayeth only: 'My evil fortune hath departed at the end.' And he becometh careless and insolent. 10

Far other do those who surrender themselves to God and who are full of good works. To such belongeth Mercy and Loving-Kindness and a glorious reward! 11

The Lord goeth on in the way of righteousness. 56

O my people! Fill your bushels to overflowing and hold your balance evenly. Cheat not your fellows of that which is their due. Transgress not at all upon this earth on which ye live. 85

That which God reserveth for you according to law and justice will be more profitable for you if ye be true believers. Not otherwise might I preserve you from chastisement hereafter. 86

Ask Mercy of your Lord and return ye to Him. God is full of loving-kindness, and hath compassion toward you. 90

Verily the blessed will inherit Paradise; they will dwell there as long as the heavens and the earth endure, if it

SELECTED VERSES

be that thy Lord decideth not otherwise. There shall be joy and gladness without ceasing; sorrow and sighing shall flee away. 106

Make your prayer at opening day and as the shadows fall, and yet again as night draweth on. Verily good deeds blot out evil ones. Therein lieth a precious teaching for those who bethink themselves. 114

Stand ye firm and endure. God giveth their just reward to those who act piously and suffereth not the same to be taken from them. 115

To God belongeth that which is hidden in the heavens and on the earth. All things shall return to Him, not one shall be lacking. Adore Him then and put thy faith in Him. Know that the eyes of thy Lord are in every place, attentive to all thine acts. 123

XII

I WILL by no means strive to justify my own Soul, for it inclineth rather to evil, if it were not that God protecteth it by His Grace. 53

How many miracles and wonders are spread out before us in the heavens and on the earth! But men pass them by and turn themselves away. 105

The more part of them cannot believe in God but that therewith they needs must associate other beings with Him in their worship. 106

XIII

IT is God who holdeth the heavens aloft without visible support. Moreover, He hath ordered all in the heavens and hath ordained the paths of the sun and of the moon.

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

righteous. Angels shall surround them from all sides and shall say: 23

'Everlasting Peace be upon you! That which ye endured on earth hath brought you joy and blessing eternal in this high and holy place.' 24

The Paradise promised to the elect is likened to a garden watered by limpid streams, a place where nothing withereth, where all is ever fresh and leafy shade aboundeth. Such shall be the end of those who give themselves up to piety. The end of unbelievers shall be torment of fire. 35

Verily We sent prophets before thee, and We gave to them wives and children. It is given to no Messenger to receive any Sign without divine authorization of the same therewith. To each age belongeth its own Book. God abrogateth or maintaineth according as He willeth. What remaineth as the stump of a tree in the earth,¹³ that is in His power to preserve or to destroy. 38

XIV

THOSE who prefer the life of this present world to that of the next and who turn away from the path of God, those who venture on tortuous ways, fall into deepest error. 3

If ye were all unbelievers, yea, even if all the world were so, yet would neither the opulence nor the glory of God be a whit diminished thereby. 8

And God will reassemble all men on the Day of the Last Judgement. . . . 21

And when this event shall take place, then will the Tempter say: 'That which God promised and foretold is indeed the Truth. That which I caused to appear to

SELECTED VERSES

you was but to mislead you and to make you go astray. Moreover, I had no power over you other than the craft and device to dazzle and deceive you. Ye were eager to follow me of your own desires. Lay not the blame thereof upon me. Reproach rather your own evil inclinations. I have no more power to help you than ye have to assist me. I have no part in your error of having before-time associated me with God in your worship. For this I refuse to be held responsible. Dreadful torments await evil-doers in the hereafter.' 22

Here then is an example and a parable which God sheweth you: 'An honest and an honourable word is like unto a tree blessed by God whose trunk is rooted firmly in the earth and whose branches push up boldly into the sky.' 24

It beareth abundance of fruit at all times, by the permission of God. 25

Evil communications, on the other hand, are like poisonous weeds, attached lightly to the surface of the soil, and enduring but for a brief season. 26

God strengtheneth the hearts of true believers with an immutable Word, in this life as in the next. He will leave evil-doers bemired in the slough of their own errors. God acteth ever as He willeth. 27

Speak to my servants who believe that they be assiduous in their worship, that they provide for the wants of the needy with the substance which We have dispensed to them, either discreetly in private, or in public, as may beseem them. Let them perform these duties before that Day shall come when neither substitution nor patronage shall avail them. 31

... If ye should reckon the benefits of God and seek to

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

number them, ye would not be able to tell the full tale, for they are unnumbered. But man reckoneth not of God's goodness toward him, nor doth he give thanks in his heart. 34

Comfort not yourselves with the hope that God will not fulfil the threats which he maketh by the mouth of His Messengers. God is the All-Powerful and He will be the Avenger, 47

When the earth shall be transformed into another and different earth, and the heavens in like manner, and when all men shall appear before Him, the One and Only God, the Ruler of the World. 48

X V

It is We who caused the Qur'ān to descend and it is Our care to preserve it. 9

Nought existeth whose sources are not in Our Being. We produce them only one by one in due time and season. 21

We cause the winds to blow, and they roll up the clouds in fleecy piles. We make fall the rain of which We cause you to drink. It is not of your own power that ye get these for yourselves. 22

It is We who hold the keys of life and of death, to revive and to let die. To Us, moreover, belongeth all that is, and to Us it returneth. 23

We know well which of you hasten forward in the good Way, and which of you lag behind. 24

Verily your Lord will one day bring them all together again. It is He who ordaineth and knoweth all that taketh place. 25

Those who fear to infringe the statutes of God will be

SELECTED VERSES

received into the gardens of delights. There shall they ever dwell amid fountains of living water. 45

A voice shall welcome them saying: 'Enter ye in peace, delivered from all trouble and sorrow of heart.' 46

Verily thy Lord is the creator of all, and He knoweth well the work which He accomplisheth. 86

We have, moreover, already accorded thee the seven verses¹⁴ consecrated to Our praise. Therein is a glorious invocation. 87

Raise thy voice then in the Praises of thy Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves before Him; 98

And worship thy Lord that thou mayest attain unto Knowledge. 99

XVI

THAT which God hath decreed will of a surety come to pass. Be not then impatient. Praise be to Him who is more glorious by far than that which thou desirest to associate with Him in thy worship. 1

On those whom He choseth from among His servants, He causeth angels to come down with the Spirit coming forth from His divine will, that He may warn you saying: 'There is no God save I myself alone. Follow ye my commandments!' 2

And if ye should reckon the benefits bestowed by God, ye would not be able to number them all. He is the Merciful One, full of compassion and loving-kindness. 18

God knoweth all the devices and desires of your heart, alike that which ye would fain hide and that which ye shew openly before Him. 19

He loveth not those who are puffed up with pride. 23

Not one benefit do ye receive except it cometh from

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

God! It is He, moreover, upon whom ye call when disaster overtaketh you. 53

If God were desirous to chastise men for their evil deeds not one would escape. But He affordeth them a respite until the appointed hour. Whensoever that time cometh they will have no power to draw back or to go forward by so much as the twinkling of an eye. 61

God sendeth you an instruction and a teaching regarding your cattle. We bid you eat of that which is produced in their bowels, of their saliva, and of their blood; pure milk which goeth sweetly in the mouth of those who drink it. 66

Verily also from the date-palm and from the grape ye obtain for yourselves stimulating drink and delicious food. Such are the marvels which We provide for those who hear and understand. 67

Thy Lord hath given to the bees their instinct to dwell in the hills, in the hollows of trees, or in hives prepared for them beforehand, 68

Saying to them: 'Feed ye on the flowering blossoms and make booty, humming as ye go, on the summer's velvet buds, flying in the ways broken for you by your Lord.' There goeth forth from their entrails a liquid changing in hue which is meet sustenance for mankind. Surely therein is matter for meditation to men of wisdom and understanding. 69

God hath created you. In like manner He causeth you to die in due course. Moreover, there be those among you who are aged and decrepit, in so much that they are ready to forget what they knew aforetime. How Wise is God and how mighty is His power! 70

God hath favoured some of you above others in the matter of what ye have acquired. Those who have been

SELECTED VERSES

favoured share their benefits with their servants who thus receive their portion equally with their masters. Will they deny that God hath blessed them thus? 78

He bringeth you forth from the bowels of your mothers, ye being unwitting. Thereafter He bestoweth on you hearing, sight, and understanding. Therein are blessings indeed for which it behoveth you to render thanks. 78

God commandeth you without fail to be just, to be generous, and to succour your neighbours. He forbiddeth transgressions and alloweth not that ye break his statutes. In like manner He permitteth not that ye do violence to any man. Verily ye have been warned. Meditate thereupon. 90

When ye have taken God to witness, then be sure to keep your promises and to observe your agreements. Forswear not yourselves but observe your solemn oaths. God knoweth all that ye do. 91

Swear not with a view to deceiving one another. In so doing ye would set your feet on a slippery path, your feet which once trod firmly in the Way of Religion. Then would ye endure the chastisement set apart for those who turn away from the road of God. A terrible punishment would await you if ye did this. 94

Make not gain and profit from that which ye have promised in the name of God. If ye but knew how much more profitable is that which God hath prepared for you! 95

All that which ye possess on earth shall vanish away, but that which is laid up with God endureth eternally. We shall reward those who persevere according to their deserving and far beyond their good works. 96

Whosoever, be they man or woman, consecrate

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

themselves to good works, if they be true believers, We will grant them joy and gladness. For such have We in store a recompense far more abundantly precious than that which they have earned. 97

When thou redest the Qur'ān, invoke God and seek refuge with Him against the Tempter, who shall be stoned. 98

Satan hath no power over those who believe and who place their confidence in God. 99

The Day will come when every soul must plead its own cause, and when each will be rewarded according to his works. None will be defrauded of his due. 111

Invite men to follow in the way of thy Lord, using persuasion and the best arguments thou hast. Discuss with the people of the Scriptures, hearing them and asking them questions in courteous fashion. Thy Lord knoweth full well who turn away from His Path and who are rightly guided. 126

If ye cannot refrain from punishment, then deal out no more than the equal of the wrong done to you. Howbeit if ye exceed in forgiveness and exact not the full penalty, that will be the better course for those who can compass it. 127

Verily God is with those who fear to transgress his precepts and who apply themselves to good works. 129

XVII

GLORY be to Him who led His Servant during the night from the Holy Temple to the Temple far away¹⁵ — whose enclosure We have blessed — that We might make manifest to him Our signs. . . . I

SELECTED VERSES

This Qur'ān sheweth of a truth the Way in which it behoveth us to act and to do. It proclaimeth the promise of happiness to true believers who continually practise good deeds. Verily for them a glorious reward is prepared. 9

We have hung on the neck of each the docket of his acts. In the Day of the Last Judgement We will produce it before his face and he shall be judged therefrom. 14

He who yearneth after the life to come, who striveth to attain to it, and whose faith is firm, he shall see his efforts fully rewarded. 19

We offer freely to one and all the Grace of thy Lord. The Grace of thy Lord is beyond the reach of none! 20

See ye how in this world we raise some above others in dignity and honour! In the world to come the degrees are more still in number and more glorious by far. 21

Moreover, thy Lord commandeth all men to worship none other beside Himself, to honour father and mother, whether but one of them be aged in thy house, or whether both have reached old age at thy side. Have a care that thou speak not despitely to them, and tease them not. Let thy words to them be ever gentle and full of loving-kindness. 23

Be modest in thy bearing towards them, full of tenderness, and be this thy prayer to God: 'Oh Lord, have them ever in Thy care, as they cared for me when I was yet a child.' 24

God knoweth the depths of your hearts better than your closest friends. He knoweth whether ye have respect to His laws and He is indulgent to those who turn again and repent. 25

Render to each that which pertaineth to him of right, 16

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

and even so do thou to the sick man and to the needy traveller. Waste not thy substance in riotous living. 26

Prodigals and spendthrifts are the brothers of Satan, and Satan was an ingrate and a traitor to his Lord. 27

If thou draw aside from those who are in want, and keep thyself at a distance, not having means to succour them, yet at the least pray for them the favour of thy Lord, and give them words of comfort and consolation. 28

Close not thy hand too tightly, neither open it too widely. For else thou wilt be deserving of blame, or wilt reduce thyself to privation. 29

Know that thy Lord unfoldeth His benefits lavishly before whom He will, and again limiteth them for whom He will. For He is fully informed regarding the hearts of His servants. He knoweth their inmost thoughts. 30

Slay not your children to escape from poverty. We will provide sustenance for them as We have done for you. To slay them is a dreadful sin, an immeasurable crime. 31

Keep yourselves far from adultery, it is sordid and base. It leadeth to ruin and perdition. 32

Thou shalt not kill any one, God forbiddeth all slaying of men, except it be in the way of public justice. In the case of him who is slain when he hath done no wrong, We give power against the murderer to the nearest relative of the victim; yet let him not abuse this power, but rather keep within the bounds of law and justice. 33

Take heed that thou lay not thine hands on the property of the orphan, except it be in the way of honest dealing that thou mayest cause it to bear fruit to the end that it may be increased. Be faithful to your obligations and perform your duty. Know ye that a reckoning will be demanded. 34

SELECTED VERSES

Whensoever ye measure, fill the bushel to the top. Weigh with even scales. The substance is there for you, and ye will be the greater gainers in the end. 35

Enter not on an undertaking of which thou hast no knowledge. Thine ear, thine eye, and thine understanding will be answerable therefor. 36

Boast not thyself vaingloriously before thy fellows, neither shew thyself haughty in the world. Thou could'st not cleave the earth by thy power, nor reach upwards to the peaks of the hills. 37

The seven heavens and the earth, and all that is within them, sing praises to the Lord, and exalt His name. There is naught which extolleth not His glory, but ye perceive not the music of the spheres nor the hymns which they raise to their Maker. God verily is the Gentle, the Indulgent to His creatures. 44

The stiff-necked and obstinate declare: 'When we shall have become dry bones, and dust about your doors, shall we thereafter be made to live again as a new creation?' 49

Say thou to them: 'Yea! Even should ye become stones or iron, or some such other thing which should seem to you a bar to resurrection.' They will ask thee: 'And who then will revive us again?' Say then: 'He Who created you the first time.' They will shake their heads in disbelief and say: 'And when will this be?' Say to them: 'It may be very soon.' 50

On the Day when God shall summon you back to Himself, hasten to Him singing His praises. It will seem to you but a moment that ye have been in the tomb. 52

Say thou to My servants that they hold converse between themselves with gentleness and restraint, in fear

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

lest the evil one sow discord amongst them. Satan is the declared enemy of mankind. 53

We honoured the children of Adam. We bore them over land and sea. We gave them sustenance of pleasant meats, and We accorded to them an evident superiority over most of the beings which We created. 70

On the Day when We shall summon all the peoples to appear before us with their apostles, on that Day shall those in whose right hand the Book shall be placed read joyfully therein. They shall see themselves unharmed by so much as a blade of grass. 71

But he who was blind in this present world, he shall be so also in the next, and yet further shall he be astray. 72

Fulfil thy meed of prayer at eve after the sun goeth down while yet thick darkness falleth not upon thee. Recite the Qur'ān until the dawn calleth again to prayer. For at the dawn prayer there must needs be witnesses. 78

And give the watches of the night to prayer. That will be a work over and above what is required of thee; then will God raise thee to a degree which meriteth praise. 81

Say: 'Oh Lord, cause me to begin all things with sincerity and with sincerity to finish them. Accord me from Thy bounty Thy sustaining power.' 82

Whensoever We shew forth our bounties unto a man, he turneth away and forthwith separateth himself from us. But when misfortune or evil overtaketh him, he ceaseth not to bewail himself. 83

Say thou: 'Each one followeth his own nature and God knoweth him who followeth the true road.' 84

They would fain know in what the Spirit consisteth. Say: 'The Spirit cometh forth from the will of my Lord.

SELECTED VERSES

Your understanding reacheth not to the comprehension of it.' 85

They say: 'We will not believe thee except thou makest to spring forth from the earth before us a fountain of living water; 90

'Or except there should arise for thee from the earth's bosom a garden planted with date-palms, and a vineyard on the hill-side thereby, and except thou causest torrents to gush forth from the midst of this garden to water it withal; 91

'Or except thou makest a piece of the sky to fall upon us, as thou sayest thou wilt; or bringest before us God and the angels in bodily form to witness to thy words; 92

'Or finally except thou ownest a sumptuous mansion adorned with carving and gilding, and except thou ascendest to heaven. Yea, we will not believe unless thou causest a book to descend from heaven for us so that we may read it.' Answer thou them as followeth: 'By the glory of my God, am I anything at all myself but a man and a mere Messenger? What is it then that preventeth people from believing, when a man sheweth them the way of truth and righteousness, and telleth them plainly that God hath only sent a simple man as a prophet?' 93

He alone is rightly guided whom God Himself deigneth to lead along the way. 97

Call upon God by His name, or invoke Him as the Merciful One, either address pleaseth equally. To Him belong the loveliest qualities and the fairest titles. In prayer raise not the voice to a shout, neither lower it to a mumble. Let thy tone be modest, clear, and unself-conscious, neither ostentatious nor inaudible. 110

XVIII

PRAISE be to Him Who hath sent down the Book to His Servant, and Who speaketh therein plainly and unmistakably. 1

Tell them then the parable of these two men: 'On one of them We bestowed two gardens planted with vines surrounded by date-palms, and separated one from the other by cultivated fields. The two gardens bore fruit in abundance and nothing was lacking in them. 32

We caused a stream to flow between the two. 33

The owner thereof, who was gathering rich crops therefrom, spoke thus as he talked with his neighbours: 'I am richer than thou art. I have besides a larger family.' 34

Then did he enter his garden, and doing himself despite and injury, cried out with a loud voice, saying: 'It seemeth to me that the delights of this garden will never pass away!' 35

Then his neighbour answered and said: 37

'Why sayest thou not rather, in entering into thy garden, that it is God who hath willed it thus, and that there is no power save in Him alone? Notwithstanding that now thou seest me poorer than thyself and with a smaller family, 39

'It may be that God will bestow upon me something still better than thy garden, or even that He will send down from heaven some catastrophe which shall render void and sterile all thy husbandry.' 40

Bring to mind for them in like manner what appeareth in the life of this present world as a parable for our instruction. Man's life is like unto water which We cause

SELECTED VERSES

to fall down from heaven. The plants of the earth drink their fill thereof, yet on the next day they become withered and scorched, when the wind hath dried up the rain. Therefore in all things it is God alone who exerciseth His power without limit or hindrance. 45

Wealth and a numerous family are the vain trinkets of this passing world. But good deeds are an enduring heritage. Far more precious are they in the sight of thy Lord, and from them springeth more abundant hope. 46

Say to them: 'Verily I am nought but a mere man even as yourselves. Only this I have that to me hath been revealed that your God is the One True God. Whosoever hopeth one Day to be acclaimed and justified before the face of his Lord, let him do justice and love mercy, and worship none save God alone.' 110

XIX

IN very truth God is my Lord and yours. Worship Him in spirit and in truth. Therein is the path of Salvation. 36

We alone shall inherit the earth and all that is on it. All things return again to Us. 40

All that is in the heavens and on the earth must needs acknowledge itself as the creation of the Merciful One and as His creature. Everything is numbered and reckoned in His Mind. 94

Each shall appear before Him, one by one, on the Day of Resurrection. 95

Those who believe and do good shall have the Merciful One as their friend on that great Day. 96

XX

TO Him belongeth all that is in the heavens and on the earth, and in like manner all that is hidden beneath the ground. 6

Thou liftest up thy voice in adoration. Know in that moment that He comprehendeth the secret of thine heart and thy inmost thoughts. 7

God is that God who hath no peer. His are the most noble qualities and the fairest titles. 8

Verily I alone am God! There is no other God beside Me. Therefore worship ye Me and give yourselves to prayer that ye may call upon Me. 14

Our Lord is He who giveth of His own nature to all things which He createth, and who guideth and directeth them thereafter. 50

And I am He who blotteth out the sins of those who repent, who accept the True Faith, who do good deeds, and who strive ever to walk in the path which He hath shewn them. 82

May He be exalted, God, the One True King. And be not troubled, oh Muḥammad, regarding the dictation of the Qur'ān before that the Revelation be accomplished. Say thou only: 'Oh Lord, increase my knowledge and grant me understanding.' 114

Endure with patience that which they say against thee in ignorance. Sing the praises of thy Lord before the dawn and at the sunset hour, and in like manner through the watches of the night. Extol His glory at the end of the day and at its opening¹⁷ to the end that thou mayest draw down His grace upon thee. 130

SELECTED VERSES

Fix not thine eyes upon the abundance with which We make glad the unbelievers to prove them. 'Tis but the tinkling of cymbals and the sounding of brass in this present world which passeth away. The portion laid up for thee with thy Lord is more precious and more enduring. 131

Order rightly thy household in the matter of prayer, and waver not in maintaining the same. We demand no favour of thee therein, since it is We ourself who dispense Our own substance to thee. Be constant in petition, since a good end is in store for those who practise piety. 132

Say then: 'Every one looketh to the end and awaiteth it. Watch and pray and ye shall know who are the companions of the way of righteousness and which among us is guided of God.' 135

XXI

THE hour of reckoning for mankind is at hand. But they turn them away, careless of the way of salvation! 1

Say: 'My Lord knoweth what is meditated in heaven and on earth. He heareth and knoweth all.' 4

It is not by chance or without purpose that We have created the sky and the earth, and all that lieth between them. 16

Those who deny Our being, know they not that the heavens and the earth were aforetime mingled in one, without form and void, that We separated the twain, one from the other, and that by means of water We infused all things with life? Are they yet without faith in this? 30

We have set up the heavens as a dome, a vault which

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

maintaineth its form without yielding, yet do they turn away from the wonders which We have performed. 32

It is He who hath created the night and the day, the sun also and the moon. All these move silently in space. 33

Every soul must needs taste of death. We prove you and try you with evil and with good, and ye shall return unto Us in the end. 35

Man hasteneth ever and tarrieth not. Abide ye in peace, nothing doubting. Verily My signs shall be revealed to you. 37

Say to them: 'I give you to understand through the Revelation vouchsafed to me, and thereupon only do I warn you. But those who are deaf hear not when they are warned, neither heed they exhortation.' 45

When, on the Day of Resurrection, We set up the scales of truth, none will be able to complain of injustice. Yea, if it be but as the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We will take due account of all. We alone shall be the judge and the reckoner of accounts in that Day. 47

On the Day on which We shall unfurl the sky as men unroll a written parchment, on that same Day shall We cause the creation to return to the form in which We produced it at the first. Verily that is a matter fixed and certain. We shall bring it to pass. 104

O Prophet! It is but in pity for the whole world that We have sent thee. 107

Say to them: 'It was revealed to me that your God is the One and only God. Will ye not then at last submit yourselves to Him?' 108

SELECTED VERSES

XXII

O MANKIND! Beware lest ye transgress the commandments of your Lord. Dreadful indeed will be the Terror and the Quaking of the Hour when it cometh upon you! 1

O Mankind! If ye doubt concerning the resurrection, then bethink yourselves that We created you from the dust of the earth, thereafter from a mere drop of man's seed which became a clot of blood and thereupon a piece of flesh modelled and informed, blown like a bubble and kneaded like a paste. From that ye may judge Our power who caused you so to be. It hath pleased Us to leave you in your mothers' wombs until the appointed time, and thereafter to bring you to birth as tender babes. Thus in due course did ye become grown men and women. Some of you never grew old, but passed away in youth, whilst others live on to become decrepit, in so far that they cease to remember all that once they knew so well, and the windows of the house are darkened. Thus also seest thou that the earth in like manner drieth up, and thereafter in turn crumbleth, when We make rains to descend upon it. Then once more doth it swell, and becometh pregnant with life and is covered with grass and green herbs in abundance. 5

All this befalleth because God is Truth itself, and hath power to raise the dead to life. He is the All-Powerful. 6

Yea, the hour cometh, be not doubtful thereof, in which God will summon back to life all those who are in the tombs. 7

There be those who hold dispute concerning God

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

without due knowledge, without being instructed in His mysteries, and without any Book to make dark matters clear. 8

Others again there be who worship God in their own manner. Whilst happiness and joy attend their ways they are quiet and make no plaint. Yet when they suffer evil, be it of the least, then turn they away and rebel. Such men are losers both now and hereafter. Therein is evident ruin and perdition. 11

In sooth God defendeth and sustaineth His true believers against the treacherous and the ungrateful. For such as these He loveth not. 38

It is permitted that ye stand for yourselves against wanton harm done to you. God is able to give the victory to those who have been hunted from their hearths without cause, because they said: 'God is our Lord.' 39

If God did not use the efforts of one faction of men to repel those of another, then would the cloisters, the churches, the synagogues, and the temples, yea, all those places where the name of God is invoked continually, be incontinently destroyed. Howbeit God assisteth only him whom He assisteth. Of a truth God is the Strong, the All-Powerful. 40

He hath power to make sure and certain the triumph of those who are established in this country, who keep the times of prayer ordained, who pay their yearly dues of alms, who command good and forbid evil. To God returneth the final solution of all things; the unravelling of the tangled skein of life is with Him. 41

Let those who have received the Scriptures know that the Qur'ān is the Truth coming from thy Lord. Let them believe and open their hearts when it is read or recited.

SELECTED VERSES

In sooth God is He who lighteth up the true road with His pillar of fire before the feet of those who have faith. 54

And this is because God is Truth itself, whilst all else invoked side by side with Him is false and availeth nothing. Verily God is the Most High, the Sublime. 62

We have no power fully to comprehend God's greatness, nor may we at all realize His majesty. He is the Very Mighty, the All-Powerful. 74

O true believers! Bow ye yourselves, prostrate yourselves before your Lord. Adore Him and do good that ye may be found among the Redeemed. 77

May your endeavours in the Way of God be conformable to the holiness of His cause. Ye are reckoned in the number of His Elect. He hath not made any difficulty for you in your Faith, which is the same as that of your forefather Abraham. He hath called you Musulmāns, those who have surrendered themselves to God, to-day as aforetime, so that the Prophet may witness in your favour and that ye yourselves in turn may become witnesses before the world of the Revelation granted to you. Observe the appointed times of prayer, pay the yearly dues of alms, hold closely to God. It is He who is your Patron, and a generous Patron is He, a magnanimous and great-hearted Protector, our Shield and Defender! 78

XXIII

BLESSED and happy are the True Believers, 1

They who humbly adore God, 2

Who hold themselves far from the pomps and vanities of this world, 3

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

And who duly acquit themselves of the obligations of charity; 4

They who are modest and shamefaced in bearing and conduct, 5

And who honourably guard the deposits confided to their care, faithfully observing all their promises and engagements. 6

Such are they who will inherit Paradise, 7

We created man from a mass of muddy soil. 8

From this did We cause a drop of human seed to exude, and to be poured into a solid vessel. 9

Then from this drop of seed We made a clot of blood, from this clot of blood in turn a morsel of flesh, and from this morsel again We created bones covered with muscles. Then have We completed the work by addition from another creation.¹⁸ Blessed be God then, the sublime and exalted Creator of mankind! 14

Thereafter shall ye die. 15

And ye shall be brought back to life again at the Day of Resurrection. 16

Those whom the fear of God rendereth pensive and thoughtful, 57

Who believe in the messages which come from their Lord, 58

And associate no other beings with Him in their worship; 59

Those who help others with their substance and give alms, fearing lest they should do too little, convinced in their hearts that they must one day give account before their Lord of their stewardship here below, 60

All such make speed and press on in well-doing and outstrip their fellows therein. 61

SELECTED VERSES

We lay no burden on any man more than he is able to bear. Before Us is a Book which relateth the Truth. To no one will wrong or injustice be done. 62

It is He who hath created for you hearing, sight, and understanding. Yet few there be who render Him thanks therefor, or who acknowledge His gifts. 79

It is He who hath scattered you over the surface of the earth, and it is into His presence that ye will be summoned when ye are brought again to life. 80

Meet evil with good, and conquer enmity with generosity. . . . 96

And say: 'O Lord, I seek refuge and shelter with Thee against the suggestions of the demons. 97

'I take refuge in Thee, O Lord, in despite of their presence and their attacks.' 100

May He, the True King, be glorified. There is no God but He, the Master of the Universe and Lord of All. 116

XXIV

... **T**HOSE who love to spread calumnies regarding the true believers, for them is prepared a sad and dreadful punishment, both in this world and in the world to come. God comprehendeth the whole world in His understanding, but as for you, ye know nothing at all. 19

O true believers, follow not the footsteps of the Tempter, for Satan commandeth vile acts and base deeds to be done by those who follow in his tracks. And in sooth no one of you may remain pure and clean-hearted without the Grace of God and without His everlasting Mercy. Howbeit God keepeth clean the hearts of whom He will. He heareth and seeth all. 21

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

In very truth, those who speak evil of honest men, men who are confident and faithful to the truth as they see it, such are accursed in this world and the next. For them is great suffering and chastisement prepared. 23

For wanton women lascivious men are made; in like manner lascivious men for wanton women; honest women for decent men, and decent men for honest women. Such are raised above calumny. For them is the Grace of the Lord assured, and glorious gifts from on high. 26

O true believers! Enter not into thy neighbour's house without leave from the master thereof, and without saluting those who are within. Such conduct availeth better for you. Therefore meditate upon the instruction. 27

If thou findest no one within, enter not at all, except thou hast been expressly permitted so to do. Should'st thou be asked to retire, do so forthwith. That is better by far. God knoweth and understandeth all that ye do. 28

Command the believers to continence in word and in look, and that they be chaste and modest in thought and deed. That beseemeth them better. God well knoweth all that they do. 30

Command also those women who believe to lower their eyes and be modest in all their bearing and conduct, not to expose their charms wantonly nor to show what they are able to hide, and to cover their breasts with a veil which really concealeth. . . . Let not women intentionally move their feet in such manner as to display hidden beauties of their persons. O true believers, return all of you to God, and ye shall gain everlasting life. 31

Arrange marriages for the unmarried amongst you, and your faithful and honest servants and maid-servants.

SELECTED VERSES

If they are poor, God will give them of the treasures of His Grace, for God's power is all-reaching, He knoweth all that taketh place. 32

Let those who cannot find a suitable partner live in continence and chastity until it shall please God to dispense His favours to them. For those of your slaves who ask to be made free, allow this, if ye think that it will be better for them. And make provision for them thereafter from the goods with which God hath favoured you. By no means urge your maid-servants to sell their bodies that they may procure for you the good things of this world. 33

God himself is the Torch which lighteth up the heavens and the earth. The shining of His Light resembleth that of an inextinguishable flame, which darteth its rays across a fragment of crystal hidden in a niche. Then is this crystal likened to a star set in pearls whose shining proceedeth from a sacred olive-tree, a tree which is neither of the East nor of the West. Its oil shineth brightly without the touch of fire, and spreadeth Light upon Light! And God sendeth out His Light over whomsoever it pleaseth Him. . . . 35

Men who let not themselves ever be turned from the remembrance of God by the calls of trade and their daily work, who are constant in celebrating His praises, who keep the appointed times of prayer, and who pay their dues of alms, are such as fear the Day when hearts will be full of anxiety and eyes of consciousness. 37

Yet will this Day surely come to recompense them for their fair deeds and to overwhelm them with divine favours. God accordeth His gifts without count or reckoning to whom He will. 38

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

As for the unbelievers, their works are likened to the desert mirage which men tormented by thirst mistake for water, until they draw near and find nothing there. But God is ever at the side of such and it is God who will settle their account. He payeth their reckoning right soon and tarrieth not! 39

Again are their doings likened to billowing clouds of darkness which move across the surface of a deep sea of tossing waves lashed to fury by the gale. Wave followeth on wave and the clouds rise higher, wrapping all in thick darkness. No longer may a man see his own hand as he holdeth it out. He whom God enlighteneth not with His own Light hath no part nor lot therein. 40

Seest thou not how God moveth the clouds and how He maketh them to accord, piling them up in masses of smoke, and silver, and fleecy white? Then thou seest rise from their bosom abundant showers of rain. From this ghostly range of mountains floating in the skies He causeth the hail to come down. Therewith doth He strike whom He will and therefrom doth He preserve whom He will. Full often the lightning flash goeth near to take away thy sight. 43

Be constant in worship, pay thine annual dues, obey the Apostle, so that thou mayest merit the Mercy of God. 56

O true believers! Let the people of your household and your children of tender age ask your leave if they wish to speak with you during three moments in the day. Thus let them do before morning prayer, and at high noon when ye are disarrayed as to your rest in the heat-time, and again after evening worship. For these are for you three intervals of pause, of rest, and of privacy. Except these three periods, there is no harm in your

SELECTED VERSES

meeting with one another or coming to one another at any time. . . . 58

Howbeit when your children reach the age of adolescence, then must they always ask leave before entering your rooms, as do those who grew up before them. Thus doth God make clear to you His commandments. He is wise and discreet. 59

As for the women who are past the age of child-bearing, who no longer look to be married again, they may unveil, yet without ostentation. Howbeit if they abstain therefrom it will better beseem them. God heareth and knoweth your inmost desires. 60

When ye enter a house, salute each the other with a mutual salutation, a dignified greeting which carrieth honour and God's blessing. It is thus that God sheweth you His signs, to the end that ye may understand. 61

XXV

BLESSED be He who hath caused Discernment and Understanding to descend from heaven on His servant, to the end that he might be a Messenger of His will to the whole world. 1

Blessed be He to whom belongeth the Empire of the heavens and of the earth, He who never adopted any child as His son, who hath never taken to Himself any associate in His sovereignty, and who created all things and decreed their destiny. 2

Say thou to them: 'I ask nothing of you except that ye take the path which leadeth to God.' 57

Yea, verily, the servants of the Merciful are those who walk the earth modestly and who content themselves

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

with saying, when they are apostrophized by the ignorant: 'Peace be upon you.' 63

They are such as pass their nights in adoring God, prostrate on their faces. 65

They say: 'O Lord, remove us far from the punishments of Hell, for its torments endure without end; it is a dreadful dwelling-place.' 66

They are such as practise charity without either reckless prodigality or niggardly miserliness, and who keep the golden mean in all things; 67

Who never call upon other deities side by side with God, who commit no murders, and keep themselves from adultery. He who doth that committeth a crime. 68

His punishment shall be doubled on the Day of Resurrection. He shall remain for a time and for times under the stroke of its ignominy and indignity. 69

But for him who repenteth, who becometh a fervent believer and practiseth good works, for such an one will God change even his evil deeds into good, for God is the Indulgent and Generous, He is the Merciful One. 70

He who turneth away from his sins with sincere repentance, who devoteth himself to good works, such an one appealeth to the Mercy and Pity of God, and his faults are forgiven. 71

Those who bear not false witness against their neighbours, and who, when they see themselves entangled in light and frivolous talk, rise and pass from the assembly with quiet courtesy; 72

Those who are eager to hear when the teachings of the Lord are read or recited, and who remain not indifferent to them, as if they were deaf and blind, 73

Those, in fine, who say: 'Oh Lord, grant that in our

SELECTED VERSES

wives and children we may find that which shall rejoice our hearts, and cause us to march in the van of those who fear lest they may forget or ignore Thy precepts'; 74

All such shall be rewarded for their perseverance with a mansion in the skies, there to dwell eternally. Their portion shall be Peace and Blessing for ever. 75

XXVI

GOD it is who created me and guideth me. 78

It is He who sustaineth me with food and with drink. 79

It is He, always He, who healeth me when I am sick and suffering, 80

And it is He who will cause me to die and will raise me to life again thereafter. 81

Moreover, He will blot out my sins, as I hope, on the Day of Judgement. 82

O Lord, grant me Wisdom and reckon me in the number of the just. 83

Place me among the heirs of the mansions of the blessed. 85

Leave me not sorrowful on the Day of Resurrection, 87

The Day when riches and a wealthy family will alike avail nothing. 88

It is the Day when that man will find joy and gladness on whom God hath bestowed a clean heart and an upright mind. 89

Must I tell you on whom the demons come down? 221

They descend upon sinners who dissimulate and cover the Truth with lies, 222

On those who lend an ear to untruths and who disseminate scandals. 223

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Howbeit they cannot touch those who are strong in the faith, who do good and neglect not to call upon God; 227 •

Nor those who defend themselves when they are attacked. Their oppressors shall one day assuredly find that the oppressor hath become the oppressed, and the oppressed oppressor. 228

XXVII

SAY then: 'None save God comprehendeth the mysteries of the heavens and the earth. The hour of their resurrection is hidden from the knowledge of men.' 65

Even if they have ideas and opinions about the future life, they are no less inclined to doubt about it, or to remain blind in face of Truth. 66

The unbelievers say: 'When we shall have become dust, even as our fathers before us, how then may it be that we shall thereafter come to life again?' 67

'Ye promise us that, as it was promised to our fathers, but such ideas are mere vanity and empty imaginings.' 68

Say to them: 'Glory be to God! Right soon will ye behold His signs. Then will ye know the truth. Verily your actions lie open to your Lord. He seeth and noteth them every one.' 95

XXVIII

THOU hast no power at all to save any whom thou wilt; it is God who guideth and directeth whom He chooseth. And He knoweth well who they are who follow the good Way. 56

SELECTED VERSES

That which is bestowed on you here below is naught but the gain of this world and the trappings thereof. But that which abideth with God and is laid up with Him is better and more enduring. Wist ye not so? 60

Thy Lord createth what He pleaseth, and as He pleaseth, whilst the false deities have no power in the disposition of aught. By His Glory, He is too far exalted above all those whom the unbelievers associate in worship with Him that they should be considered at all in comparison with Him! 68

Verily thy Lord knoweth what your hearts would fain hide as plainly as He seeth that which ye shew forth. 69

He is the Lord who hath no peer. To Him belongeth glory in this world and the next. He is the supreme Judge and to Him shall we all return. 70

Strive to gain the everlasting mansions by using that which God dispenseth to thee, and neglect not the portion which cometh to thee from the things of this world. God giveth thee blessings, spread them abroad to thy neighbours. Bring not trouble and sorrow with thee as thou goest through the world. God loveth not such as sow discord around them. 77

Call not on other deities side by side with God. There is no God but He. All things else shall perish and pass away, but the Glory of His Countenance remaineth. To Him belongeth supreme power and before Him it is that ye shall appear. 88

XXIX

Do men imagine that they will be freely forgiven when they say: 'We are true believers', and that they will not be called upon to give proofs of their loyalty? 1-2

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

He who striveth to go forward in the way of righteousness and truth doeth it to his own good. God, in His wealth and power, hath need of nothing. The whole world is under His feet, and He is far above all. 6

Verily We have laid a duty upon men to do good to their parents and to cherish them. 8

Those who seek some other protector beside God are likened to the spider which spinneth her web. In sooth the web of the spider is the most fragile of all dwellings. God grant that they may know this in time! 41

God hath created the heavens and the earth to shew forth Truth. Therein is a matter for the meditation of true believers. 44

Recite that which hath been revealed to thee by the Book, and fulfil the hours of prayer. Worship preserveth us from vileness and from deeds of shame. Thy surest help is in calling upon God. God knoweth all that ye do. 45

Discuss not with the people of the Scriptures except ye use gentle speech and courtesy; only with those who commit evil deeds may ye do otherwise. Say to the people of the Scriptures: 'We believe in that which was revealed to us as we do also in that which hath been revealed to you. Our God and yours are One, and to Him we have surrendered ourselves.' 46

Before thou didst receive the Qur'ān thou hadst known naught of the Scriptures, nor hadst thou read aught therefrom. Had it been otherwise then those who refuse to believe thee might have had cause for their doubts. 48

Now to those who are well acquainted with the Scriptures,¹⁹ the Qur'ān is full of evident signs. And no one

SELECTED VERSES

turneth away from Our signs save the impious and obstinate. 49

Such be those who say: 'If but some miracles had come down for him from His Lord, *then* might we believe.' Answer and say: 'Signs and wonders belong to God alone, but as for me, I am but a messenger and a watchman sent to warn you.' 50

Oh My believers, faithful and true! My state is kingly and vast is My domain. In every place ye may worship Me. 56

Every soul shall taste of death, and thereafter shall ye return to Us again. 57

Life here below offereth but vanity and empty show. The true and blessed life is that of the hereafter in the world to come. If they but knew this! 64

And those who strive earnestly to live in Us, them will We guide in Our Way. God dwelleth ever in the hearts of those who give themselves to good deeds. 69

XXX

THE more part of mankind but know the outward appearance of our life in this present world. They give no thought to their final end. 7

Do they not turn their minds to reflect that God hath not created the heavens and the earth and all that lieth between them, except with a firm foundation and built up on the Truth, and making towards a time and an end which He hath fixed and determined? Howbeit the more part of mankind are obstinate to deny that they will appear before their Lord at the Last Day. 8

Have they ne'er traversed the earth and considered the end of the generations which went before them, which

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

were more powerful by far than they are? These ploughed the earth and made stretches of fruitful fields where they have left fallow. To such were apostles sent with clear proofs of their message, yet all in vain. Albeit to God they did no harm nor injustice thereby: it was their own souls which they lost; on themselves the ruin fell. 9

As for evil men who mock at God's warnings and treat them as lies, the last end of such is ever burdened with sorrow. 10

God maketh His creation to proceed from Himself, thereafter to turn back again, and in the end all returneth to Him its Maker. 11

On that Day when the trumpet shall sound the hour of final return, then shall the sinners be dismayed and their faces shall be confounded. 12

Not one of their neighbours shall be received as an intercessor for any of them. They too, on their side, shall deny their fellows. 13

When that dreadful Hour shall sound they shall separate themselves one from another. 14

But those who have believed and done good works, they shall have joy and gladness, and shall walk amid flowery glades and gardens full of blossom. 15

And those who are stiff-necked and obstinate and who treat Our signs as lies, who, moreover, refuse to believe that they shall be raised to life again in the next world, such shall be plunged into sorrow and pain. 16

Extol then the glory of God, O true believers, each morn and eve, being persuaded that to Him alone praises should return in the heavens and on the earth. Worship and adore Him when night falleth and at the hour of rest in the blaze of noontide. 18

SELECTED VERSES

He causeth life to come forth from death, and in like manner death from life. Yea, He maketh the earth to live when it is well-nigh dead. Thus also shall ye be raised to life in His good time. 19

Yea, one of His great marvels it is that He hath created you and hath scattered you over the face of the earth, as living souls and thinking beings. 20

Yet another marvel is it that He hath given you help-meets issued from yourselves with whom ye may live together, and that He hath drawn you and bound you to one another by ties of affection and of loving-kindness. What wonder lieth in this for those who will meditate thereon! 21

The creation of the heavens and of the earth, the diversities of your speech and of your colours, are likewise miraculous to contemplate. Therein also is matter upon which every man may think. 22

In the number of His signs and wonders are to be reckoned the rest which He giveth you in slumber, and the changing of night and of day. Not less marvellous too is your zeal to acquire His favours, a desire which cometh from Him. In all these things are signs for the discerning heart. 23

Doth He not perform miracles when He causeth the lightning to flash before your eyes, inspiring you with terror or with hope, and when He poureth down from the sky the rain which giveth fresh life to the parched land below? Yea, for those who have eyes to see there are signs of His presence and power in these things. 24

Nor is it less of a portent or a whit less marvellous that the sky and the earth remain firm and keep their form continually by His order, and that one Day, when He

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

shall summon you, ye will come forth from the inmost parts of this earth on which ye dwell. 25

To Him belongeth all that is found in the heavens and all that dwelleth on the earth. Nothing is there which is not subject to His command and obedient to His precepts. 26

It is He who produceth the created world and who causeth it to return into itself. He stretcheth out His hand and it is done. In the heavens and in the earth He is the All-Powerful, the supreme Judge. The fairest likenesses and the loveliest titles beseem Him. 27

Thus then lift thy face piously toward the True Faith, toward this divine work, to which God hath caused human nature to conform. There is no change or mutability in the work of God. It is the unalterable Religion, wherein is no variableness nor shadow of turning, howbeit the more part of mankind wot not of it. 30

Return then to God and observe His statutes and commandments. Worship God and associate none with Him in so doing. 31

Be not of those who separate themselves from the True Faith and become obstinate sectaries and stiff-necked recusants. Every sect delighteth in its own imaginings and justifieth itself therein. 32

Do they not perceive nor understand that God giveth largess with lavish hands to whomsoever He will, and He setteth a measure for His people thereby. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Therein is matter for the meditation of those who are strong in the faith. 37

Give freely to thy neighbour that which is his due, and bestow alms with bountiful hand on the helpless and on needy wayfarers. Thus is it meet that those should act who yearn that the face of God may shine upon them

SELECTED VERSES

and give them peace. Verily these shall walk with the Redeemed. 38

Be sure that such of your substance as ye put out to usury, to increase it by adding the goods of other men thereto, causeth no increase of your treasure laid up in Heaven. Howbeit that which ye bestow in alms for the love of God is bread cast upon the waters; it shall return to you doubled. 39

It is God who createth and sustaineth you, then causeth you to die, and anon reviveth you. Is there among your neighbours or your fellows any one who can equal Him therein? Then let His glory be praised and extolled. How far is He above all those who are worshipped beside Him! 40

On land and sea troubles spring from the handiworks of men, to the end that they may taste the fruit of some at least of their evil deeds and may repent and turn back therefrom. 41

God hath created you all weak and feeble. From the weakness of the babe He causeth you to come to the strength of the grown man. Thereafter He bringeth you again to feebleness and grey hairs. He createth what He will. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful. 54

Yea, when the last trump shall sound, then will the sinners swear that they have endured but a short hour in the tomb. Verily they palter with the Truth in like manner while their life on this earth continueth. 55

Howbeit those who have knowledge and faith shall say to them: 'Ye have lain there since the hand of God was upon you in death up to this Day of Resurrection. Here then is this Day which ye denied and of which ye would fain be ignorant.' 56

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

XXXI

WE have commended to man the care of his father and mother. His mother bore him in her womb and endured suffering for his sake. Two years long did she nourish him from her own body.²⁰ Remember then thy parents and Me, thy Creator. To Me will be thy return in the end. Bethink thee thereon. 14

God will bring forth to light at the great Day even that which may weigh no more than a grain of mustard-seed, be it enfolded in the crevice of the rock or hidden far in the skies or deep in the earth. God knoweth all things and from Him is nothing obscured nor concealed. 16

Observe the times of prayer, cherish good, and hinder evil. Endure with patience the ills which now attend thee. To him that overcometh will I give the crown of life. 17

Mock not thy fellows with disdainful laughter. Let not thy gait be haughty or thy bearing insolent; God loveth not those who are proud in their own conceit, who vaunt themselves vainly. 18

Task thyself to be modest in thy deportment and let thy voice be low and gentle. . . . 19

He who submitteth himself to God and doeth good is anchored firmly to that which endureth, for the end of all things is in God. 22

To God belongeth what is in the heavens and what is on the earth. To Him pertain all Riches and Glory, here and hereafter. 26

To create and revive you all is for Him but a very little thing; no more toil is it than if ye were but a single creature. 28

SELECTED VERSES

That which God proclaimeth is crystal Truth. Let not the pomps and vanities of this world distract you nor the Tempter turn you away from following after God. 33

XXXII

HE is the Knower and Comprehender of the seen and of the hidden; He is the Strong and the Gentle. 6

He it is who bringeth to perfection all His creatures. He put forth His hand and formed Men from the earth. 7

Thereafter He caused man's offspring to grow from a drop of human seed, a liquid mixed in origin. 8

Then drew He him out to perfection of form and breathed into him of His own divine Spirit. Therefrom have ye hearing, sight, and understanding. Howbeit few there be who have knowledge or comprehension of these things. 9

No heart can conceive of the joy which awaiteth him for whom is laid up treasure in heaven, the guerdon of his good deeds here below. 17

Shall a true believer be even as he who is given up to evil and riotous living? Verily of these two there can be no likeness or comparison. They are as far apart as the East is from the West. 18

XXXIII

O YE true believers! Be ye mindful of the benefits which God heapeth upon you. When the enemy came upon you in battle array, He sent forth His wind and obscured their sight. Invisible hosts sustained you. God's eye was upon you, watching over you to guard you. 9

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

When enemies assailed you on all sides, so that your eyes wandered hither and thither in anguish, seeking a deliverer, and your heart was in your mouth with fear and terror, then did ye utter your doubts before God and your hopes were extinguished. 10

Yet had ye an example upheld before you in your Prophet. He serveth as a pattern and model for all those whose hope is in God, who believe in the Last Judgement, and who are ever mindful of their God. 21

God promiseth His Mercy and His Largess to men and women who devote their lives to His service, whose faith is firm, and who ever practise piety; to those who are loyal and patient and who fear only lest they transgress the divine precepts unawares; to those too who are lavish in charity, who keep the days of fasting, and who abstain from fornication; moreover, also to those who continually call upon their God. 35

O true believers! Call ye upon God with frequent invocations and extol His glory at morn and at eve. 41

It is He who extendeth His blessing over you, His blessing and the blessing of His angels, to draw you from darkness to His marvellous Light. God is ever full of Mercy for those who stand firm in the faith. 42

The Peace and the Blessing from Him shall be their portion on that Day when they shall stand forth in His presence. For them is prepared a great and a splendid reward. 43

O Prophet! We have sent thee to be a witness of the Truth, to proclaim the gospel, and to warn the unenlightened. 44

Call men to God, as He hath instructed thee. Thou art the Torch which giveth Light to all around. 45

SELECTED VERSES

Give out the good news of the mighty favours which await believers at the feet of God. 46

God and His angels bless the Prophet! O ye who believe! Call down on Him fervently the Peace and the Blessing. 56

O true believers! Hold yourselves far from transgressing the statutes of God and speak ever the words of truth. 70

Then will God turn all your deeds to good, and He will blot out your sins from His book. Whosoever obeyeth God and His Prophet, he shall obtain joy unceasing and gladness without end. 71

We offered the sacred Treasure²¹ to the dwellers in the heavens and on the earth, and also to those in the hills. Howbeit all feared to undertake its burden and craved to be relieved thereof. But carefree man took it up without thought and became thereupon full of vice and void of understanding. 72

XXXIV

GLORY to God to whom belongeth all in the heavens and on the earth, and to whom likewise pertaineth glory in the world to come. He is the Wise, the Comprehending. 1

He knoweth what entereth into the earth and what cometh forth therefrom, what descendeth from heaven and what goeth up there again. He is the Indulgent and the Loving who blotteth out our sins. 2

We have sent thee, O Muḥammad, for the health of the whole world, to carry the gospel to all, and to ward off from mankind the dangers which threaten them. For

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

the more part of men are undiscerning, knowing naught of the meaning of things. 28

No apostle did we ever send to any city but that the wealthy men thereof have said: 'We believe not in thy mission.' 34

Ever used they in such case to say: 'We have all that we need of goods and of children; naught of sorrow or suffering can touch us.' 35

Say to them: 'My Lord giveth of His benefits lavishly to whom He will, as He only is able, without stint or measure. Howbeit, the more part of mankind knoweth nothing thereof.' 36

Neither your wealth nor your children will bring you near to Us, but only your faith and the alms which ye distribute to your fellows. To such as thus lay up treasure in heaven a twofold reward is prepared as the recompense for their deeds. Peace and Blessing await them in the mansions on high. 37

Say to them: 'I ask no reward from you, such reward ye may keep for your own benefit. True recompense cometh from God alone, who is Witness of what I do.' 47

Say also: 'My Lord purveyeth Truth and manifesteth it to His creatures. He is the Great Initiate of the Mysteries.' 48

Say further: 'Truth hath burst its bonds and is gone forth into the world; error shall not maintain itself nor reappear for ever.' 49

And add: 'If I were to fall into error, I must needs submit to the consequences, and if I am in the Way of Truth and righteousness, it is thanks to the Light which God sheddeth upon me. It is He whom we hear and know close beside us.' 50

SELECTED VERSES

XXXV

GLORY be to God, the Sublime Maker of the heavens and of the earth. . . . 1

None may take from men the portion of His Mercy which God bestoweth upon them, even as also none hath power to give to any what God hath refused them. He is the All-Powerful who decideth all things. 2

O mankind! Bethink you of the benefits with which God hath overwhelmed you. Is there any other creator who nourisheth you with sustenance from the heavens and from the earth. There is no God but He! Yet ye would turn away from Him! 3

It is God who maketh the wind to blow, who moveth the clouds across the sky. By their means do We send rain to water the dead lands and revive the earth when well-nigh parched. Therein is a resurrection of life before your eyes. 9

There are those who yearn for power, forgetting that all power resideth in God alone. The good word riseth to Him. Good deeds help it upward. Those who sow the bitter seed of evil shall reap therefrom naught but sorrow and pain. Their wiles shall avail them nothing. 10

O mankind! Ye are poor and helpless, having need of God in all things; and God is Wealthy, to Him be praise evermore. 15

If He should so desire, He would sweep you from the face of the earth, and would bring forth a new creation in your place. 16

Verily for God nothing could be easier than that. 17

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

No man may ever bear the burden of another's sin, however closely related or however dear may be those who would fain ask of him such a boon, or however small may be the fault. As for thee, O Muḥammad, thou shalt not be heard nor followed save by those who fear the judgement of their Lord, accepting His word without open proof or sign, and who are constant in their worship of Him. Whosoever remaineth chaste and righteous will not lack his reward, for to God must we all return at the last. 18

There is no more likeness between the blind and those who have sight than there is between darkness and light, or between the pleasant coolness of the shade and the torrid heat of the midday sun. 19-21

Neither are the living and dead any more akin than these. Howbeit God causeth whom He will to hear and understand. It is not for thee to rouse those who are buried fast in the tomb, or to cause them to hear and arise. Thou art but a watchman and a messenger. 22

They who chant and recite the Book of God, who are constant in prayer, and who in secret or openly give alms of that with which we have endowed them, such may well hope to receive an hundredfold, treasures which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt. 29

They shall be rewarded with full measure, pressed down and overflowing; God shall overwhelm them with the gifts of His Grace. He is the Merciful, He knoweth and comprehendeth. 30

Yea, that which We reveal to thee from the Book is the Truth and confirmeth that which was sent down aforetime. Know that God is aware of every act and every movement of His creatures. He seeth and knoweth all. 31

XXXVI

By Yā Sīn²² and the Qur'ān which radiateth forth
Wisdom, as sunbeams from the sun, 1-2

Thou art, in very truth, one of the Apostles; 3

And thou followest the right road, 4

The road lighted and made plain by the Most High,
He who is full of Mercy, 5

That He might send news thereof to a people who sat
in darkness, unaware, to whose forefathers no message
had been given. 6

Of whom the more part already deserve naught but
that Our Judgements on them should be carried out;
and they yet continue in their unbelief. 7

Howbeit those who believe in the Revelation and fear
the Lord, without asking a sign or open proof, they will
hear thee, and they alone. 11

We raise the dead to life. We note down their deeds
while they live and We mark each of their footsteps.
All things do We write down in the open Book. 12

Glory be to Him who createth two and two of that
which cometh forth from the earth, both of yourselves, and
of other things hidden from you and unknown to you. 36

Yea, among the manifold signs of their Lord they
receive not one without dispute thereon and denial
thereof. 46

When it is said to the unbelievers: 'Feed the poor and
hungry with the goods which God giveth you,' then
answer they the believers saying: 'Belongeth it to us to
feed those whom God would have fed had He so willed?
Ye do err and are out of the way.' 47

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

But when the trumpet shall sound, then shall they make speed to leave the tombs and to present themselves before the Lord. 51

'Unhappy we!' thus will they plain themselves, 'who is this who from our quiet tombs hath rapt us back to life?' Then shall one say to them, 'This is the Great Event of which God foretold and of which the Apostle bore witness.' 52

One trumpet blast, but one clear call, and each one of Our creatures shall appear before Us! 53

In that Day there shall be no room for the plaint of injustice from any soul. Each shall receive but the due reward of his own deeds, those alone. 54

Thus the dwellers in Eden shall enjoy the fruits of their good works. 55

They and their wives, reclining on couches, shall joy in the cool freshness of the garden, in the pleasant shade of leafy glades. 56

There shall they taste of all fair fruits and to them shall be given all their hearts' desire. 57

Peace and blessing! These shall be the welcoming words with which the Lord in His loving-kindness shall gently greet them. 58

How is it that man comprehendeth not that We created him from a drop of liquid? He presenteth himself before Us truculently, like an enemy moving to attack. 77

He declareth parables to us and he forgetteth his own beginnings; he saith: 'Who is there who can cause dry bones to live?' 78

Answer him and say: 'He who produced them aforetime from nothing, He it is who will revive them again. His knowledge embraceth all His Creation.' 79

SELECTED VERSES

It is He who maketh the fire wherewith ye warm yourselves to spring from a green and living tree. 80

Is it not He who hath created the Heavens and the earth and He who is ever able to create more in their likeness? Yea, verily, and He is the Creator Who knoweth all. 81

When He desireth to accomplish any matter He hath but to say: 'Be!' and it becometh. 82

Glory be to Him between whose hands lieth Sovereign Power over all things, and to Whom shall be your final return. 83

XXXVII

By those who²³ stand humbly before God, 1

By the powers of Light which scatter the darkness, 2

And by those who recite the divine Word; 3

I swear that your God is God the one and only. 4

He is the Sovereign Lord of the heavens and the earth, and of all that lieth between them. It is He who throweth open the gates of day and lighteneth the horizon. 5

What think ye then of this Master of the Worlds, 87

Of God who created you, both you and the works of your hands? 96

Extol the glory of thy Lord, the sublime Master of all, who hath no peer nor equal. 190

Peace be on His Apostles, 181

And praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds! 182

XXXVIII

WHEN thy Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create a Man from a lump of clay. And when I shall have fashioned him and breathed into him my Spirit, then will ye prostrate yourselves before Him in reverence and venerate Him,' 71

Then did all the angels throw themselves on their faces together before Him; 72

Save Satan alone, who was puffed up with pride and was numbered with the damned. 73

God asked of him: 'Who restraineth thee that thou prostratest thyself not before the work of My hands? Wouldst thou be haughty and prideful, or deem'st thou thyself superior to this thy fellow?' 74

'In truth,' answered Satan, 'I am indeed superior to him since thou createdst me from fire and him from mere mud of the soil.' 75

'Away with thee, be thou stoned to death!' then answered him again the Lord, 76

'My curse shall cleave to thee till the Judgement Day.' 77

'O Lord,' quoth Satan, 'grant that thy judgement against me may be delayed until the Day of Resurrection.' 78

'So be it,' quoth the Lord, 'verily it shall be delayed as thou sayest until that Day, whose time is determined.' 79

O Prophet, speak thus to them: 'I ask no wage as guerdon of my toil, nor am I one of those who set forth in words what cannot be. 86

SELECTED VERSES

'The Qur'ān is a warning and a message for the whole of the Universe. 87

'And when the time of deferring shall have run its course, then shall ye know what will be.' 88

XXXIX

Is it not to God that our sincere worship is due? 3

He hath built up the heavens and the earth on a foundation of truth. He unrolleth night to follow after day and day in succession to night. By Him the courses of sun and moon are traced out. Each pursueth his road to the determined end. Is He not in truth the Mighty and the Kindly One? 5

He created you all from one single being, from whom He had first drawn forth a companion for him. He hath bestowed upon you eight couples of domestic cattle. He hath created you in the veins of your mothers and in the darkness of a threefold covering, in making you to pass from one form to another. He is your Lord in very truth and to Him belongeth all Power and Empire. There is no God but He; how can ye then turn away from Him? 6

If ye should be of those who are ungrateful, yet is He so Wealthy that He can ignore you all. Yet would He not that His creatures should be blackened with the smirch of ingratitude. Your loyalty giveth Him pleasure. Each soul beareth the load of its own sins; no one else may lighten your burdens or ease your necks from the yoke. Ye shall all be brought back to your Lord. Then will He show you the fruit of your works; for He knoweth fully all that your hearts would fain conceal. 7

Ask thyself then whether a convinced believer, who

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

passeth his nights in the adoration of God, prostrate or standing upright, who giveth thought to the life to come and aspireth to Mercy, yea, he who is informed of God's will, can at all be likened to him who is in ignorance of the truth. Let men of understanding meditate on this. 9

Say to them: 'O true believers! Fear lest ye break the commandments of your Lord. Those who do good in this present world shall have good for their portion in the world to come. God's domain is vast, His power far-reaching.' Verily We will heap rewards unnumbered on those who continue steadfastly in the good Way. 10

Say again: 'The Lord hath ordained that I worship Him with the worship of sincerity, in spirit and in truth, that pure worship which belongeth to Him alone. Yea, I have been commanded to become the first of those who submit themselves to His Will.' 11

Say yet again: 'O people! Act as ye have power and strength to do. I too will act on my side, as I think meet, and then will ye see the end thereof.' 39

God gathereth souls at their death as a gardener culleth blooms, and those who are not dead he taketh in their sleep. He keepeth those whom death hath rent away and holdeth back the others until the hour ordained. Therein is matter for the meditation of thoughtful hearts. 42

Say: 'O God, Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou who knowest things hidden and things seen, Thou wilt give judgement between them in the matter over which they are in dispute.' 46

But if the evil-doers were in possession of all that the earth holdeth and as much again, yet would they sacrifice it to buy for themselves the sufferings which await them at the Resurrection. Then shall they see things, which

SELECTED VERSES

their hearts never conceived, come to pass at the word of God and by His Will. 47

If some evil befall a man, then doth he call upon Us for aid. And if We transform this evil by Our grace into some blessing or favour, then he saith to himself: 'I was sure that it would fall out thus.' Howbeit this is but a trial and a testing, yet the more part of them know it not. 49

Say to My servants who sinned against themselves: 'Despair not of the divine Grace, for God pardoneth all sins. He is the Indulgent and He is the Merciful.' 53

Return then to God and submit yourselves before that chastisement searcheth you out there where ye will find no way of escape, though ye seek it with tears. 54

Follow these fair commands which God hath revealed to you, before that chastisement come suddenly upon you in an hour when ye expect it least; 55

Before the soul cry out aloud: 'O miserable man that I am, who have rendered myself guilty in God's sight, in that I have made light of His statutes and mocked His commandments.' 56

And before it cry in agony: 'If God had but guided me, I should have been of those who feared Him,' 57

Or that it say, in the throes of its sufferings: 'Ah! if it had been granted me to return again to earth, then verily I should have lived a good and righteous life thereon.' 58

Then shall it be answered: 'Yea, moreover, My signs did reach thee indeed, but thou treatedst them as lies; thou wast proud and obstinate and full of ingratitude.' 59

God is the Creator of all things, and it is He too who is their supreme Preserver. In His hands are the keys of heaven and of earth. Those who doubt His signs are of all men most miserable! 63

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Worship God therefore, and acknowledge ye Him. 66

Alas! Men are far from comprehending the Majesty of God, or from rendering due regard to His Greatness as it behoveth them to do. At the Day of Judgement the whole earth will be but a handful of dust in His fingers. In His right hand the heavens will be furled like a scroll. Praise be to Him! How far is He exalted above all that is worshipped beside Him! 67

Yea, when the trumpets shall sound, then shall all that is in the heavens and the earth lose sense and comprehension, save only those whom God shall sustain with the favours of His Grace. Then when the trumpet shall sound the second time, all shall rouse themselves and stand up on their feet before Him. 68

Then shall the whole earth be illumined by the Light of Her Lord. The Book shall be set down and opened. The prophets shall come before Him, together with those who were witnesses of that which those prophets aforetime did preach. Then shall the judgement be pronounced in fairness and equity. None shall be injured thereby or punished without cause. 69

And every soul shall be recompensed according to its works, for God knoweth all that they have done. 70

Those who feared to go counter to the commandments of their Lord shall be led in a great company toward Paradise, whose gates shall open wide as they approach. Then the keepers of the gates thereof shall say unto them: 'May Peace overshadow you and Blessing be upon you! Ye were pious and virtuous on earth. Enter then here and abide eternally.' 73

And they shall answer and say: 'Praise be to Him who fulfilleth His promises and causeth us to inherit this land

SELECTED VERSES

of the blest, where we may dwell as long as it shall please us.' How fair and lovely are His courts, how sublime the reward of those who follow righteousness.' 74

Then shalt thou see the angels who surround the throne extol the Glory of their Lord, and bear witness to the justice of His judgements, chanting in chorus: 'Praise be to God, the Master of the Worlds.' 75

XL

THE revelation of the Book cometh from God, the Mighty and the Wise, 1

From Him who blotteth out our sins and accepteth our repentance, who is severe in His chastisements, but also full of long-suffering. There is no God but He. To Him shall be your Return. 2

The angels who uphold the Throne, and those who surround it, sing the praises of their Lord. They put their trust in Him and implore His Mercy for those who believe, saying: 'O our Lord! Thou pourest out over all things Thine inexhaustible bounty. Thy wisdom and Thy knowledge have no bound or limit. Accord then Thy Mercy to those who turn away from their sins, coming back again to Thy way. Spare them and save them from the torments of the fire.' 7

God showeth you His signs and wonders, sending you down sustenance from the heavens. But none save those who turn themselves to God, to acknowledge Him, are warned thereby. 13

Worship ye then your God in spirit and in truth, following that Faith which alone is truly His, howsoever the impious may make merry in despite thereof. 14

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

He is the Sublime, the Master of Empire, and Ruler of All. To whomsoever of His servants pleaseth Him doth He grant the Spirit, the instrument of His will, to avert the terror of the Day when all men must appear before His throne. 15

On that Day the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. Naught will then be hidden from before God. To whom then will belong the Power? Surely to God, Sole Ruler and Controller! 16

On that Day will every soul be recompensed according to its deeds. On that Day there will be no injustice or favouritism! God will make His reckoning swift and sure. 17

O mankind! This life here below is but for a season. Life everlasting pertaineth to the world to come. 39

Be patient then, O Muḥammad! The promise of God standeth sure. Ask forgiveness for thy sins and chant the praises of thy Lord each morn and eve. 55

XLI

REPEAT, O Muḥammad, the words which We put into thy mouth: 'I am but a man like yourselves. Albeit it hath been revealed to me that yours is the one and only God. Accept ye His guidance and implore His Grace; there is no blessing on the impious, 6

'Who spend their lives in pursuit of their own ends and deny the future life!' 7

He maketh the earth to stand firm on strong supports from the heights above to the depths beneath, and He giveth His Blessing over all. 10

Those who say: 'Our Lord is God', and who follow the

SELECTED VERSES

right path, around them will the angels gather and say: 'Fear ye nothing more, nor afflict yourselves any further.' They will cheer their hearts with the good news of the eternal mansions promised to them. 30

Who then holdeth fairer speech than he who saith: 'I take part with those who submit themselves to the will of God.' 33

Good and evil cannot keep company together. Return good for evil. Then shall he who is thine enemy become a friend and a protector. 34

But who can rise to this height without patient courage and steadfast endurance? Howbeit there is none who shall attain to it who will not also share in joy unspeakable. 35

Whosoever doeth good doeth it to his own profit, and whoso doeth ill shall taste the evil fruits thereof. Thy Lord is never cruel to mankind, it is not He who crusheth you. 46

Whosoever We grant a favour to a man, then goeth he away full of joy and straightway forgetteth Us; but so soon as misfortune or evil toucheth him, then doth he address fervent prayers to Us. 51

XLII

IF God had wished He might have made one sole commandment for all the world from the beginning; rather hath He bestowed His Grace on those to whom He hath deigned to grant it. In very truth evil-doers have neither friend nor protector. 8

He who made and disposed the heavens and the earth hath created you in pairs, just as He hath the animals, so

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

that He might cause you to increase and spread over the face of the world. There is nothing like unto Him, He it is who seeth and comprehendeth all. 11

The keys of heaven and earth lie in His hands. He scattereth His benefits lavishly on whom He will, and He can bring them all to naught again. His knowledge embraceth all things. 12

God hath shewn you as your Religion the same path which he commended aforetime to Noah. Yea, it is in truth that very Faith which is now revealed to you, and which was commended to Abraham, to Moses, and to Jesus, that Religion might not die out in the earth. Therefore avoid heresies and schisms. 13

Mankind hath not gone astray in ignorance but by a deliberate act of transgression, since the Revelation had already been vouchsafed to them of old time. 14

God is lavish to His servants and generous of heart. He heapeth up His favours on whom He will. He is the Mighty, the All-Powerful. 19

For him who layeth up treasure for himself in heaven We will add to that treasure. And to him who striveth after the good things of this present world We will accord them. But such an one shall have no portion in the world to come. 20

When that world cometh thou shalt see the evil-doers filled with remorse and fear in face of what awaiteth them. But they shall not escape it. As for those who have believed and done good, thou shalt see them dwelling in the Gardens of delight. There shall they obtain all the desire of their hearts, by the Grace of their Lord. They shall know the blessings of Grace Divine. 22

Hear then God's promise to His loyal and faithful

SELECTED VERSES

servants. Say thou to them: 'As a guerdon in return for the pledges and promises of God I ask from you naught but that ye love your neighbour. Whosoever hath done a good deed, We will return its value to him in blessing. Verily God is the Merciful One who knoweth and acknowledgeth the good which ye do.' 23

He it is who accepteth the repentance of His servants and who pardoneth their offences. He knoweth all your deeds. 25

If ye meet with calamity know that it hath been brought about by your own hands; howbeit God pardoneth the more part of your sins. 30

Your goods and possessions are but the fruits of this world. Better far and more enduring are the good things which God hath laid up for those who believe and who put their trust in Him; 36

For those who avoid gross sins and deeds of shame, for those who have learned to forgive when they are spitefully used; 37

For those who obey their Lord, keeping the hours of prayer and deliberating duly over their common business; for those, finally, who are ever ready to stretch out a helping hand when there is need for succour and support; 38

As also for those who defend themselves when they are violently attacked, for violence must be met with firmness and repulsed with courageous moderation. 39

Howbeit he who forgiveth and is reconciled to his enemy shall find recompense with God. Your Lord loveth not the angry and stubborn-hearted. 40

Endure evil with patience and forgive, for therein is great and true wisdom! 43

Answer then to the call of your Lord before that Day

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

come when no man shall be able to turn God from His judgement. Then will ye have no help or shelter against Him, nor any way in which ye may disavow what ye have done. 47

It is given to none to speak with God, save only by Revelation or in a veiled and mediate way, 50

Or else through a Messenger²⁴ who communicateth the Revelation according to the command of God. How Exalted and how supremely Wise is He! 51

Thus is it that We revealed to thee a Spirit charged with Our Will for thee. Thou knowest naught of the Book or of faith. We have caused thee to be a light to shew them forth. With this light do We illumine those of Our servants whom We choose. Thus art thou a guide for the whole world and shewest it the true way, 52

Toward the path of that God to Whom belongeth the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. Is not the end of all things found in God alone? 53

XLIII

YEA, the clear and perspicuous Book, 1

We sent it in the Arabic tongue, so that ye might hear and understand. 2

It is part of the Book laid up with Us above and framed in a golden binding of Wisdom, 3

With Us who are God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. 84

Blessed be He to whom belongeth the Sovereignty in the heavens and on the earth and over all which is between these two. He alone knoweth the set Day and the Hour when ye shall all return unto Him. 85

SELECTED VERSES

XLIV

IN sooth the Book is plain and easy to understand; 1

On the Night of Blessing did We cause it to come down, and thus We were He who sendeth word to His people. 2

On that Night all is ordained with wisdom by Our decrees. We send Emissaries to men as Our delegates. 3

Therein is a special Mercy from thy Lord, who knoweth and comprehendeth all. 5

What fair gardens, what crystal fountains men have been obliged to abandon in this world! 25

What pleasant fruitful fields, what sumptuous dwellings; 26

And what sweet delights, which they loved to savour, they must needs leave to others! 27

Yea! We took these back and made them an heritage for those who followed after. 28

The heavens and the earth mourned not nor bewailed those who thus regretfully departed, nor was any respite allowed them nor delay accorded. 29

In truth it is not by chance nor at all by caprice that We created the heavens and the earth and what lieth between these twain. 38

We created them with one sole end, to shew forth the Truth, of which the more part of mankind have no desire to comprehend aught. 39

Howbeit the Day shall come when the good shall be parted from the bad. This shall come to pass on the Day when all shall appear before Us. 40

On that Day friend will have naught to hope for from

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

the help of friend. On that Day none will be able to assist his fellow, 41

Save only if God take pity on any. For He is Kind and Loving, the Great-Hearted One. 42

XLV

THE heavens and the earth are full of signs and wonders for those to whom faith hath given eyes to see. 3

Yea, in your own nature and being, and eke in those of the beasts and birds spread over the face of the earth, there are miracles enow for the true believer. 4

This garland of wonders is a beacon light for men, a Direction and a Mercy for those who fear continually lest unaware they may transgress the commandments of God. 20

Those who give themselves up to evil, do they yet hope to receive from Us the same recompense as those who truly believe and who practise well-doing? Do they conceive in their hearts that the life and the death of the good will be of a like manner with that of the bad and will partake of the same lot? How false is their judgement and their imagination vain! 21

It is to the end that He may spread abroad the knowledge of the Truth that God hath created the heavens and the earth. Every soul shall be recompensed according to his works. None shall lose the fruit of his toil and his strivings. 22

What thinkest thou then? He who hath set up his own passions and desires to be a god to him, he whom God permitteth to wander at his will, whose heart and ears are sealed, and whose sight is veiled, by whom shall

SELECTED VERSES

he be guided, since God hath abandoned him? Will ye not meditate on this? 23

Such men as these are fain to say: 'There is no other life than this which we spend here on earth. We live and we shall die. We are borne away on the stream of time! What know they of this whereof they speak? Therein is naught but their own presumptuous imaginings. 24

When Our teachings, so plain and clear to understand, are recited to them, all that they have to answer is but: 'If ye speak sooth, then bring our fathers back to life again.' 25

Answer them and say: 'It is God who setteth you in life and it is He who causeth you to die thereafter. At the end of all things He will gather you all on the Day of Resurrection. Therein is no shadow of dōubting, albeit the more part of men would fain know nothing concerning it.' 26

Their own evil deeds shall stand up before them, then shall they see the truth of that which they made mock of whilst they were in the world. 33

All praise be to God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Sovereign of the World. 36

He is magnified and exalted in the heavens and on the earth. He is the Mighty and the Wise. 37

XLVI

BEFORE the Qur'ān was revealed the Book of Moses was a Guide for mankind and a work of Mercy. This present Book, in the Arabic tongue, confirmeth the other which went before it, to the end that the obstinate and perverse may be warned and that the gospel tidings may come to the gentle and pious. 12

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Those who say ever: 'Our Lord is God,' and who act rightly and do truth, they shall find shelter and a refuge from terrors and pains. 13

They shall be the guests of Paradise. They shall live there the life that fadeth not, in recompense of their deeds here below. 14

We have laid upon man the duty of shewing affection toward his father and mother. His mother bore him in sorrow and brought him into the world with suffering. For thirty months did she bear him and feed him from her breast. When he becometh adult and reacheth the age of two score years, then doth he implore God, saying: 'O Lord, inspire me with gratitude for all the benefits which Thou hast heaped upon me, even as Thou didst satisfy my parents before me with good things. Grant that I may accomplish good deeds so that Thou mayest be pleased with me, and cause me to be happy in my children. I place myself in Thy hands. I am of those who ever remain faithful to Thee.' 15

Such are the men with whose good works We are well pleased, and whose sins We pass over. They shall dwell ever in Paradise. What hath been promised to them shall surely come to pass. 16

Verily the rank of each shall be proportioned to his merits! Every man shall receive according to his works and none shall be frustrate or disappointed. 19

XLVII

O TRUE believers! If ye stand by your God, He will help you in your time of need and will stablish your goings that your foot shall not slip. 7

SELECTED VERSES

For those who follow the path of duty, God lighteth up the Way of Truth and inspireth to piety. 17

Know then that there is no God but He. Implore pardon for thy sins and in like manner for those of all believing men and women. God knoweth the way that ye take and the place of your abiding. 19

The life of this present world is but fleeting and unreal, vanity of vanities! Howbeit if ye believe in God and follow His commands, He will compensate you therefor and will demand no sacrifice of your wealth or belongings. 36

XLVIII

WE have opened the way²⁵ for thee to a glorious victory, 1

So that We may blot out all thy sins, both those committed of old and those of yesterday, and may crown Our mercies to thee. Thus then art thou confirmed in the way of truth, 2

And upheld by the stretched-out hand and the strong right arm of God. 3

It is He who strengthened the hearts of the believers and added courage to their intent. To God belong the hosts of heaven and of earth, and in His infinite Wisdom He decideth all things with perfect knowledge. 4

He treasureth up His designs and worketh His sovereign will in that He hath reserved for those who believe, both men and women, eternal joy in gardens watered by never-failing streams, where they shall dwell continually. There will He wipe away all tears from their eyes and all bitter memories from their hearts; so that their happiness may be unsullied and their gladness untarnished. 5

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

We have sent thee, O Muḥammad! to bear witness of Our Truths, to tell forth the gospel, and to warn the recalcitrants. 8

As for thee thyself, have faith in God and in His heavenly Messenger. Render thanks unto Him, extol His glory, and celebrate His praises at morn and at eve. 9

Those who have made a covenant with thee have made it likewise with God. Therein was the hand of God upon their hands. Whoso violateth his oath doeth it to his own hurt, but whoso keepeth it shall find recompense full and free with His God. 10

He it is who hath sent His Apostle with Guidance and with the true Faith, to the end that He may exalt it above every creed and religion. May this witness regarding God suffice to bring you to Him! 28

Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, and those who gather round him are strong against the infidels and the unbelievers, yet are they full of tenderness one to another. Thou seest them kneel down and prostrate themselves before God to obtain His favours and His divine Grace. Their faces and bearing shew forth their humility, and are stamped with the marks of reverence and awe. Verily the Scriptures liken them to a fruitful crop which springeth up from the earth, groweth great on its stalks, and becometh strong. Yea, the husbandman himself marvelleth thereat. Thus are the true believers, so that the infidels are in great dismay at the sight and fall into despair. Howbeit such of these as shall return to God and shall do good shall yet attain to the Divine promise. Their sins shall be blotted out and their recompense shall be glorious. 29

XLIX

O TRUE believers! If any vile person bring tidings which stir up your wrath, yet strive to control your anger. That will keep you from some evil deed which after ye may bitterly repent. 6

If twain among the believers fall out between themselves, make peace between them and cause them to be at one. And if one of them act wickedly toward the other, then contend against him who doeth wrong until he return to walk again in the way of God. If he maketh honourable amends, then bring the twain together in all equity and be impartial in thy judgement. God loveth those who act fairly and in equity. 9

Know that true believers are all brethren. Therefore smooth away the differences between your brethren, and fear to transgress the commands of God, if ye wish to obtain His Grace. 10

O true believers! Let men beware how they mock and gibe at one another. Those who are scorned may well be better than their scorers. Likewise let women take care that they rail not the one against the other. Those of whom they make sport are perhaps of more worth than themselves. Impute not wrong-doing to your neighbours, neither lightly speak evil of them. Backbiting and slander beseem not those who have embraced the holy faith. Those who repent not of such doings and who renounce them not shall be held as wicked and sinful. 11

O ye who believe! Beware that ye give not yourselves up to suspicion, for there are suspicions which are sins. Spy not one upon another. Tell not your neighbours'

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

faults abroad nor whisper of their wrong-doings. Who among you would tear to rags the flesh of a dead brother? Would ye not turn away from such an action, would it not stink in your nostrils? Return then to your God. He loveth to pardon you, for He is Kind and full of Grace toward you. 12

O mankind! We have created you all from a single man and woman; We have disparted you into families and tribes that ye may know one another as friends. He among you is most esteemed before God who best observeth His precepts. Know ye that God is informed of all things and is fully instructed regarding all that ye do. 13

Those who dwell in the tents of Kedar and who inhabit the desert places, they say: 'Verily we believe.' Answer them, saying: 'Not so, but say ye rather: "We are of the Faith of Islam."' Not yet are your hearts illumined by the light of faith. Howbeit if ye obey God and hearken to His Apostle, then shall none of your good deeds be without reward, for God is Kind and Loving and sheweth Mercy to men. 14

L

It is We who have created mankind, and We know well what his soul meditateth within him; for We are nearer to him than the beats of his heart. 15

Yea, whilst the two watchers who stand on either side of a man, on his right hand and on his left, observe him with all care, 17

Then speaketh he no word which escapeth the pen of one or other of them, standing with ready quill to write all that cometh from him.²⁶ 18

SELECTED VERSES

When the supreme moment shall come, in the full stress of reality, then in truth cometh the hour when thou would'st fain draw back and hide thyself. 19

Yea, when the trumpet shall sound, then cometh the Day foretold, 20

On which every soul, with a guide and a witness by its side, shall come to appear before God. Then shall it be said to each in turn: 21

'Thou livedst on earth all unwitting of this which now cometh upon thee; now is the veil fallen away which covered thine eyes aforetime. Now seest thou clearly and walkest no longer in darkness.' 22

And the Spirit by his side shall say to him: 'Behold now the writing of thy deeds wherein is all that I have written concerning thee.' 23

LI

VERILY the earth hath store of marvels for those who have faith to see! 20

And in your own selves! Perceive ye not what wonders be there? 21

So is it likewise with the heavens where is laid up your sustenance and all that is promised to you of wealth and of treasure, 22

By the Master of heaven and earth, ye have therein truth crystal clear; human tongue cannot speak more truly than do His marvels to your eyes. 23

We have created all things in pairs that ye may meditate thereupon. 49

Seek refuge then with God. From Him do I come as His messenger to give you tidings and clear warning. 50

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Worship no other being together with God. Verily I am he who hath a charge from God to bring you good tidings and to warn you of things to come. 51

God is the supreme Disposer of all, He whose Power extendeth over all things and is unshakeable by His creatures. 58

LII

THE chastisement of God is sure and certain. It will come to pass and will not fail. 7

None hath power to turn Him away therefrom. 8

The Day shall come when the heavens shall be shaken with one dreadful shock, 9

And in which the mountains shall pass away like smoke and vanish as the mist. 10

On that Day, woe to those who accused God's Apostles of deceit and of fraud, 11

And likewise to those who discourse of futilities and are entangled in a web of vain words. 12

LIII

As a star which sendeth out its rays, 1

So doth the Qur'ān enlighten us by Revelation. 4

Your friend erreth not nor strayeth from the way, nor doth he sin in ignorance. 2

He recounteth not futilities nor relateth vanities. 3

It is the all-powerful Spirit who hath inspired him and breathed into him his message, 5

The Spirit filled with Wisdom who giveth Guidance to men. 6

SELECTED VERSES

He sheweth himself, high and lifted up, on the glorious
Horizon, sublime and exalted. 7

Then He descendeth and draweth near, 8

Even as the two sides of a bow are joined together, or
yet more closely than these. 9

Then did he reveal to the lowly servant of God that
which the Lord desired that he should reveal. 10

The heart may not deny that of which it is witness
which took place within itself. 11

Would ye doubt that which he perceived so clearly? 12

Yet again was he aware of it, when it descended once
more, 13

By the Cedar of the Frontiers, 14

Where are the mansions of the Elect. 15

When the Cedar, bathed in Light, reflected its rays. 16

The eye bore the Brightness thereof, and closed not the
eyelid against it, neither lacked in respect by turning
itself away. 17

It perceived the wondrous marvels sent as signs by its
Lord. 18

God is the beginning and the end, He is the last and
the first. 25

He disposeth all things in heaven and on earth, that
the evil-doer may find his punishment in his own mis-
deeds, and even so the man of good life may have recom-
pense in what he doeth well. 31

For such as flee vices and mortal sins, such as have but
human weaknesses laid to their charge, to them is God full
of kindness and abundant mercy. From the moment when
He created you, He knew you altogether, when as yet ye
were hardly existing in the wombs of your mothers. 32

No one may bear another's burden. 38

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Each shall have to his credit what he may have been able to gain. 39

For his strivings escape not the watchful eye of his God, 40

Who in His infinite generosity recompenseth without reckoning. 41

And all things have their final end in thy Lord. 42

Then worship Him and prostrate yourselves. Adore ye your God! 61

LIV

HOWBEIT they treat all Our message as lies and as fables, and follow the devices and desires of their own hearts, though their end be already ordained. 3

The Hour of Judgement will be the time and place of your assembling. Ah! How tragic and how bitter that hour will be for you! 46

We have created all things according to fixed laws and established rules. 49

And all that man doeth is written down in the Book. 52

Great and small, all is recorded therein. 53

The just shall dwell ever in flowery gardens by the borders of enchanted streams. 54

As recompense of their loyalty they shall repose on couches ranged in order by the throne of the all-powerful King of Kings. 55

LV

GOD is the Merciful One, 1

Who taught us the Qur'ān. 2

He it is who created man, 3

SELECTED VERSES

And breathed Wisdom into him. 4

The sun and the moon follow the road marked out for them by Him. 5

Stars and trees²⁷ alike prostrate themselves before God, 6
Who raised the heaven on high and hung it poised²⁸ above us. 7

He created man from moist earth like the potter's clay, 14

And likewise bright spirits clear as smokeless flames. 15

And which of your Lord's benefits are ye fain to deny? 16

All that is not of Him will fade soon or late, yea, it shall vanish and appear no more. 26

Only the face of thy God shall remain, haloed with Majesty and aureoled with Glory. 27

How shall ye deny the blessings of your Lord? 28

Behold, all that is in heaven and on earth calleth upon Him. He ever worketh His sovereign Will. And which of God's kindnesses are ye able to deny? 29

What shall be the harvest of good, if it be not a good far better and more glorious? 60

Which then of the Lord's favours desire ye to deny? 61

Blessed be the name of thy Lord, the Sublime and the Exalted, Great-Hearted and Full of Majesty. 78

LVI

WE have decreed death as your portion, and none is able to change Our decrees, 60

Or to hinder Us from bringing in your place others like unto you, and producing you again in a form of which ye are unwitting. 61

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Ye who know the story of our former creation, wherefore do ye not meditate thereon? 62

Have ye considered your labour in the field? 63

Is it in truth ye who plough and sow, who weed and prune? Or is it rather We Ourselves, the great Husbandman? 64

If We willed it so, then would your crops become but dry stalks of broken straw. Then would ye lament and cry continually: 65

'Behold, we are left without resources, helplessly indebted, shorn of the fruits of our toil.' 66

Here then is teaching and instruction, a sublime recitation, 77

Which is part of the Book where all lieth written. 78

Let none approach it but the pure in heart. 79

This Book is sent to you from the Master of the Universe. 80

Who dareth to deny the message of Divinity? 81

It is sustenance for your hearts, oftentimes wilful and inclined to obstinacy. 82

When the soul riseth to the throat of the dying, 83

When ye cast looks of terror on every side, 84

We are closer to the departing soul than ye may ever be. Albeit eye cannot see Us nor mind perceive. 85

Therein is clear Truth, sure and certain. 95

Extol then the name of thy Generous Lord. 96

LVII

ALL in heaven and on earth extolleth His Glory. He is the Strong and He is the Wise. 1

To Him pertaineth the rule of the heavens and the

SELECTED VERSES

earth. He bringeth to life and He causeth to die. All abideth in His care and lieth within His Power. 2

He is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, the source and the origin. In His Knowledge are all things concluded and contained. 3

He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six separate periods, thereafter ordaining the universe. He is aware of that which boreth into the earth and of that which riseth to the surface, that which cometh down from the sky and that which mounteth up to the heights above. He is with you wheresoever ye may be. God is witness of all that ye do. 4

Know ye that the life of this world is but a play, a vain show, and a mean shadow of reality. It offereth you naught but vain and empty riches, the heaping-up of goods, and the begetting of many descendants. It is likened to rain which maketh green the grass, whose aspect seduceth the ignorant and heedless, those who reflect not on the swift fading of the grass and the withering of the flower. Yet thou seest them turn colour, grow pale, and forthwith become dry. But in the world to come, howbeit there be great sufferings for the wicked, yet is there also Mercy and sweet solace in God. The life of this present world is but a fleeting joy which blossometh for an hour. Be ye not led away thereby. 20

Strive ever to attain the Grace of your Lord, and reach forward to Paradise and the Blessed Life hereafter, which continueth ever like the continuance of heaven and earth. It is promised to those who believe in God and heed His Apostles. It is a favour which God accordeth to whomsoever He will. The Grace of God is not limited; He bestoweth it without measure, and it hath no end. 21

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

There is no evil nor calamity which befalleth upon earth or which cometh upon you yourselves, but that it was already written in the Book before We decreed its happening. All this is a light matter for your God, and costeth Him no toil. 22

Fret not yourselves for that which ye lose or fail to attain, neither put your trust too much in the favours which ye receive. God loveth not those who are cast down by reason of the loss of this world's goods, neither hath He in affection those who are puffed up by fleeting attainment. 23

He loveth not those who find their joy in riches, and who urge others to follow the like path. If they persist therein, abandon ye them to their own devices. God is too wealthy and too rich in glory to have need of their good-will. 24

Verily We sent signs with Our apostles. We sent with them the Book and the Scales, that We might establish justice among men. Iron likewise did We send down. Therein is terrible disaster for mankind, yet also much benefit and many blessings. It was thus ordained so that God might know those who would aid Him, Him and His Messengers, without piercing the secret or comprehending the mystery. God is in truth the Mighty and the Powerful. 25

LVIII

SEEST thou not that God knoweth all that is in the heavens and on the earth? Never do three confer together but He is with them as a fourth to hear their conference, nor five, that He maketh not a sixth in their deliberations.

SELECTED VERSES

Whether they draw together few or many, He is ever with them, wheresoever they meet. At the Day of Resurrection He will recall all that they have done, for He is informed and instructed in their devious ways and knoweth all the web that they weave. 7

LIX

O YE true believers! Fear lest ye wander from God's Way. Let every soul be aware of what it maketh ready for the morrow. Tremble lest ye transgress the divine command. God hath full knowledge of all your deeds. 18

Be not of those who forget their God. God forsaketh such and leaveth them in forgetfulness of their own souls. Such are the impious who wander and stray. 19

He Himself is this God beside whom there is no other. He knoweth the seen and He comprehendeth the Unknown. He is the Kind and the Merciful. 22

He is God beside whom there is no other. He is the King, the Most Holy, the True, our Guard and Defender, the Mighty, the All-Sufficient, and the Glorious. How far is He above all with which we might compare Him! 23

He is God the Creator, who begetteth and formeth. To Him belong the fairest Titles and the most lovely Qualities. In the heavens and on the earth all things chant His praise and extol His glory. He is the Judge who distinguisheth, who divideth asunder the good from the bad. 24

LX

O YE true believers! Take not mine enemies and yours as your friends. They witness to their affection for you, whilst yet they reject the Truth which is revealed to you. They repulse you and the Prophet and cast you out from their hearts, because that ye believe in God who is your Lord. When ye shall go forth to fight with them that ye may defend My cause and deserve My Regard, will ye then run to meet them in friendship and amity? I know fully all that ye would conceal and all that ye would pretend. Whoso among you will act thus treacherously shall be lost and go astray. 1

If they should meet you alone and apart then would they show you how much they are your enemies. They would fain have influence over your arms and your tongues; they desire your return to the ways of error. 2

Howbeit it may be that one day God will, nevertheless, cause to be again between you and your enemies the friendship that once was. God is able to do all things. He is Generous and full of Loving-Kindness. 7

Yet God forbiddeth not that ye should be kind and just to those who have never contended with you because of your faith, nor driven you from your hearths. He loveth such as act with fairness and use self-control. 8

O Prophet! If women who are believers come to speak with thee, taking the oath of fealty between thy hands, promising to worship God alone and no other with Him, and not to steal, not to commit adultery, and not to slay their babes, not to claim for them a false paternity with men who are not their fathers, and if they

SELECTED VERSES

are willing to obey in all which is praiseworthy; then receive thou their oaths and implore the Mercy of God for them. He is Generous and full of Compassion. 12

LXI

It is He who hath sent His Apostle with Guidance and the true Faith, to raise him above all others, howsoever the idolaters be enraged thereat. 9

O true believers! Shall I tell of a blessing and a boon which can redeem you from the ills and torments of Hell? 10

Believe then in God and His Messenger! Fight in the path of God, surrendering to Him your goods and your persons and making them a free offering to Him. That will bring you glorious recompense. If ye but knew it! 11

Then will God blot out your sins. He will bring you into orchards where sweet waters flow and will prepare for you the fair demesne of the Gardens of Eden. Verily there is joy everlasting. 12

And other favours also, which ye would fain possess, shall be kept laid up for you in like manner. The recompense of your sacrifices shall be the help and protection of your God and victory nigh at hand. These tidings bear to the true believers. 13

LXII

ALL that is in the heavens and upon the earth extolleth the praises of God, the King, the Most Holy, the Mighty, the Judge of all. 1

It is He who raised up an Apostle among those who

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

were in Ignorance, to the end that he might relate to them the Wonders of God, and might cause them to live pure and godly lives, and teach them of the Book and of Wisdom, they who until that time were wandering astray in evident darkness. 2

O true believers! When the call to Friday Prayer soundeth aloud, then hasten to go forth to the worship of God. Let be your business and your trading. It will be more profitable for you to do so. If ye but knew! 9

When ye shall have completed the service of prayer, then go abroad everywhere and search for profit on your merchandise, so that ye may acquire substance, by the favour of God. Meditate ever upon God, then shall ye be numbered among the blessed. 10

LXIII

O TRUE believers! Let not your wealth and your families turn you away from the remembrance of God. They who are caught in the snare of the world are misfortunate in very truth. 9

Give alms of the substance which We have dispensed to you, before that death come upon you and that ye are obliged to say: 'Lord, if Thou hadst accorded me a brief respite, then would I have made largess and given gifts and should have been numbered with the righteous.' 10

Alas for you! God giveth no respite to that soul whose term of life is at an end. God is fully informed of all that ye do. 11

LXIV

ALL that is in heaven and on earth singeth the praises of God. To Him belongeth the Sovereignty and to Him the Praise. He hath power over all things that are. 1

No scourge or plague cometh but by the will and permission of God. Yea, God warneth men by revealing His will to that man who believeth in Him, for verily God knoweth all things. 11

Your wealth and your children are temptations for you. The true riches are treasures in heaven, laid up with God. 15

Have regard for the commandments of God, and serve him with all your strength. Harken unto Him, obey Him, and give alms unto men, if it be but for your own sake. He who keepeth himself from the stain of avarice shall be among the Redeemed. 16

If ye make a generous loan to God He will return it to you double and will blot out your sins; for He knoweth all your good deeds and He is full of long-suffering. 17

It is He who knoweth what is open and what is hidden. He is the All-Powerful and the Wise. 18

LXV

... To him who believeth in God and in the Last Judgement, and who followeth His commands, to him doth God grant easements and aids, 2

Yea, and favours also, above all that he can ask or hope for. To him who trusteth in God, God becometh his sure refuge and shelter, and favoureth his designs. In truth God ordereth all things according to His will. 3

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

To women whom ye put away allow support and hospitality.²⁹ Lay not hands upon them, nor lodge them meanly. Should they be with child, then take all care of them until such time as they be delivered. Agree with them regarding an equitable arrangement so long as they shall be suckling children. Or, if there be some impediment, then the child may be put with a foster-mother. 4-6

He who is able to distribute largess to others, let him do it with a lavish and a generous hand, whilst he who is obliged to count all that he spends must provide for others according to his means. God exacteth no more from any of us than He hath already dispensed to each. As our problems arise He provideth the solution, and maketh us able for every obstacle. 7

It is God who hath created the seven heavens and as many earths. His commands descend from Him and circulate among these various spheres. We may know then and be sure that God hath power over all things and that His knowledge embraceth the whole of existence. 12

LXVI

O TRUE believers! Ask pardon of God by a sincere and final renunciation of your sins. Then will your Lord blot out your faults and will bring you into the Paradise where quiet waters flow clear, on that Day on which the Prophet and those who are with him shall be justified by their God and by no means confounded. Their Light shall go before them and make bright their way towards the right hand. Then shall they say: 'O Lord! Make perfect our Light, blot out our sins, for all lieth in thy Power, and we are in thy mighty Hand.' 8

SELECTED VERSES

LXVII

BLESSED be He whose hand disposeth our destinies and who hath power over all that is, 1

He who hath stablished death and life to put you to the proof and to see which of you will act best in accord with His will. He is Most Mighty and He hath Mercy upon you. 2

He hath formed the seven heavens placed one upon another. Thou shalt find no discord in the works of God. Lift thine eyes towards the firmament and see if thou canst discover any crack or blemish therein. 3

Look well once again. Thine eyes shall fall back upon thee, exhausted in the search for a fault which they find not, and wearied of looking for defects which are not there. 4

Say: 'It is He who hath scattered you over the face of the earth and who will gather you together on the appointed Day.' 24

Say again: 'He is the Merciful. We believe in Him and in Him do we repose our trust. Ye shall know on that Day which of us is in error.' 29

LXVIII

FOR those who fear to disobey God are prepared gardens of delight in the presence of their Lord. 34

Is it meet that the just and the unjust should fare alike? Those who submit to God's will, and they who transgress His commands, should We give the same portion to each? 35

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

LXIX

THE Day of Judgement will surely come. 1

What then is this Day? 2

And how may We explain to thee the nature of its Coming? 3

When the trumpet shall sound the first time, 13

When the earth and the mountains, with all that they bear, shall dissolve and be scattered in fragments, disparted at one stroke, 14

Thus shall be the Coming of that Day. 15

The sky shall be rent asunder, and on that great Day it shall be drawn aside like a curtain. 16

The angels shall be at their posts. Eight of them shall bear the throne of thy Lord. 17

On that great and terrible Day each one of mankind shall stand before God. Not one of your most secret deeds but shall be unveiled to His gaze, for all things shall be naked and open before Him. 18

He whose Book shall be given into his right hand shall say joyfully: 'Take, and read my reckoning. 19

'For I knew of a surety that I must one day render account of my deeds.' 20

Verily that man shall rejoice in a life full of happiness, 21

In hanging gardens and terraced orchards, 22

Where the bunches of ripe fruit hang down to meet the earth. 23

To them shall it be said: 'Eat ye and drink, may it do you much good! It is the recompense of your good deeds done aforetime.' 24

He whose Book shall be given into his left hand shall

SELECTED VERSES

cry aloud: 'Would to God that I might be spared this shame and be delivered from this disgrace, 25

'And that I might never have known this reckoning! 26

'Would to God that death had devoured me and finished my life! 27

'To what purpose, alas, my wealth of yesteryear, 28

'And my power that once was, which hath vanished like smoke.' 29

There is no need to swear by that which is manifest, 38

Nor yet by that which is veiled from our sight, 39

That the Qur'ān is the Word brought to us by the Heavenly Messenger. 40

It is no speech of a mere rambling poet or a half-crazed mystic! 41

Nor is it the utterance of a familiar spirit. 42

It is a Revelation from the Lord of the Universe, 43

And the Guide of those who follow the Path. 48

It is the Truth itself brought within your reach and given into your grasp. 51

Invoke then the Name of thy exalted Lord, and extol Him in His being, high and lifted up. 52

L X X

THERE is one who hath knowledge of the inevitable punishment, 1

Which nothing can avert from the stiff-necked and obstinate. 2

It shall come from God who hath in His hold the ladder of Existence and the stairs of Being. 3

The Angels and the Spirit ascend toward Him, through a day which counteth fifty million of years! 4

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Man is sanguine by nature and eager for gain, 19

Quickly cast down when trouble befalleth, 20

Puffed up with pride when Dame Fortune smileth. 21

But the Worshippers leal and true are of other sort. 22

Constant ever in prayer are they, 23

And always they set aside some of their substance, 24

For the needy who crave, for the shame-faced and self-respecting poor. 25

They believe in the Last Judgement, 26

And they are filled with fear at the thought of God's chastisement. 27

For none is assured of refuge from His punishment, or of shelter from His wrath. 28

Such live in honourable continence and perfect chastity, 29

Or if otherwise, then have they meeting with none save their wedded wives or purchased slaves, and they are not dissolute or licentious. 30

And without lust or covetousness or breaking of the Law, 31

They keep faithful watch over the deposit entrusted to their care, respect their contracts, and keep their promises. 32

Nor are they less sincere in bearing witness or in giving evidence. 33

They observe scrupulously their religious duties and the times of prayer. 34

Such are they who shall rejoice in the blessed life, and be crowned with mercies and benefits, there in the gardens of the blest. 35

SELECTED VERSES

LXXI

WHY then should ye despair of the divine clemency and loving-kindness? 13

Bethink you how God created you by stages and gradual transformations! 14

He hath caused you to grow from the earth like plants. 17

Thereafter He will bring you back again and cause you to come forth anew. 18

'O Lord, accept my penitence and that of my dear ones. Pardon all those who enter my house with faith in their hearts. Blot out the sins of him and of her who believe in Thee, and remove the oppressors far from us.' 28

LXXII

TO God alone are consecrated our mosques and our fanes. Worship none other beside God. Adore Him only. 18

LXXIII

THOU drowsy one who sittest hunched up under thy cloak! 1

Rise up at night to worship, and sleep less. 2

Sleep only half the night or still less. 3

Consecrate more time to the adoration of God and recite the Qur'ān with musical chanting. 4

We shall communicate to thee Words pregnant with fate, 5

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

During thy vigils, when fervour is strong and emotion deep and prayer is ardent. 6

Thou hast leisure for thy occupations during the day. 7

Therefore invoke the sacred name of thy Lord at night-time and consecrate thyself to Him and Him alone. 8

It is He who is Lord of the East and of the West. Beside Him there is no other God. Therefore it is to Him alone that thy prayers must be addressed, to Him only that worship is due. 9

LXXIV

THOU wrapped in thy cloak! 1

Rouse thyself and give warning to mankind. 2

Extol the glory of thy Lord. 3

Purify thyself and wash away thy stains, 4

Flee from unworthy deeds, 5

Give not that thou mayest draw profit from thy giving. 6

Every soul is the hostage of its own actions, and by them is held prisoned. 38

And whatsoever they may think thereof, yet is the Qur'ān a warning leading to salvation. 54

Whoso will follow the Way, let him read therein. 55

Verily what we shall find in it is that which is pleasing to God. 56

He who will conform himself thereto will have Piety and Mercy for his portion. 57

SELECTED VERSES

LXXV

WHAT shall it profit the repentant soul to make vows or conjurations on its behalf? 2

When the soul of the dying shall have mounted to his throat and be ready to depart, 26

And he shall cry aloud: 'Who will bring me healing or relief?' 27

When the soul feeleth that its departure is imminent, 28

And thigh rubbing against thigh at length ceaseth to move, 29

On that day man goeth to meet his Lord. 30

Now that man had neither believed nor worshipped. 31

He had denied everything and shrugged his shoulders in disdain. 32

How could he suppose then that he would be allowed to wander at his own sweet will without penalty thereafter? 36

LXXVI

HATH not man passed through a period of time in the which nothing specially distinguished him from other living beings? 1

We created man by means of a meeting of the two sexes. Thereafter did We test him and try him by according to him the gifts of hearing and of sight. 2

Thus did We show him the Way in which he should go. Some gave thanks therefor; others refused to follow and turned away. 3

But as for thee, bless and praise the most sacred name of thy Lord each morn and eve. 25

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

And at night-time cast thyself on thy face before Him and extol His glory at length. 26

He extendeth His Mercy to those who are worthy of it. As to the impious, warn thou them of the sad punishments and the heavy chastisements which await them. 31

LXXVII

WHEN the stars shall be hidden and turned into darkness, 8

When heaven shall reveal that which it now holdeth concealed in its bosom, 9

When the mountains, split into fragments, shall fly upward in glittering golden dust, 10

And the apostles shall all be gathered before their Lord, 11

Then woe to the unbelievers! That day shall be dreadful for them! 15

LXXVIII

WE pour down water in abundance from the clouds. 14

Therewith do We make grain and green herbs to grow, 15

And cause rich orchards to blossom. 16

This continueth until that Day on which Our good servants shall be parted asunder from the bad. That Day of separation will see the gathering of all men. 17

We put you on your guard, and We warn you against the coming chastisement. On that Day man will see all the works of his hands. They who persist in their

SELECTED VERSES

obstinacy and recalcitrance will on that Day cry out aloud: 'Would to God that I were but a handful of dust!' 40

LXXIX

THEY shall ask thee concerning the Hour of destiny and shall say: 'When cometh this hour of vengeance upon us?' 42

It is not for Thee to determine the day or the hour. 43

Moreover, God alone knoweth the moment of its coming. 44

Thy duty is but to warn those who doubt. 45

On that Day when the trumpet shall sound the Hour of Resurrection, then will it seem to them that they were placed in the tomb but on the afternoon or morning of that very same day. 46

LXXX

LOOK! Some one cometh to see thee, moved by zeal for the faith, 8

And fear of the Lord. 9

And thou, thou neglectest him and carest not to help him. 10

Away with such slothfulness! The Qur'ān is there to be read to every earnest seeker. 11

Whoso seeketh the good Way shall find profit therein. 12

'Tis on these pages so honoured and blest, 13

In a place where all purity ever doth rest, 14

That the Word traced by the pen stands confest, 15

Written by noble and glorious hands. 16

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

LXXXI

WHEN of the girl-child who was buried alive it shall be asked for what crime she was put to death, 9

And the pages covered with records of the deeds of each person shall see the light of day, 10

When at last the heavens shall proclaim and reveal that which they had not allowed to appear; 11

Then shall the furnaces of Hell roar with crackling flames, 12

Whilst Paradise shall throw wide its gates to welcome its honoured guests. 13

Then shall every soul know the lot which hath been reserved for it. 14

Such are the words of the illustrious Messenger, 19

Who, charged with full authority, standeth by the immovable throne. 20

All do his bidding, who is the loyal and faithful Servant, chief Confidant of his Lord. 21

Your fellow citizen and tribesman is no madman nor demented, 22

He hath seen God, in His own Likeness, on the flaming Horizon. 23

LXXXII

WHEN the sky shall be rent asunder, 1

And the stars shall be scattered, 2

And the oceans mingle their waters, 3

And the tombs shall be riven open, 4

Then shall every soul see ranged before its eyes its own deeds both old and new, both of former and of latter days. 5

SELECTED VERSES

'O man!' then shall be said to it, 'who hath caused thee to be proud and rebellious against thy Magnanimous Lord, 6

'Who created and perfected and moulded thee, 7

'Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste to the form which it pleased Him to make?' 8

LXXXIII

WOE to those who make the bushel short and the weight light, whose scales are uneven, and whose measure defraudeth, 1

Whilst when they themselves buy they exact full measure and just weight. 2

Yet they so handle the balance and basket as to defraud others to whom they sell. 3

Alas for such! Do they not reflect that one Day they shall stand before the Lord? 4

That Great and Terrible Day, 5

When all shall appear before Him to learn each what is his lot! 6

Nay, they believe not nor reflect. Now verily know ye all, that the misdeeds of the impious are written in the Sijjīn. 7

Who will inform thee regarding the Sijjīn, what it is? 8

It is a book covered with the records of misdeeds. 9

But the register of the just is in the 'Illīyyūn. 18

Who will tell thee what the 'Illīyyūn is? 19

It is a book which recalleth good deeds, 20

Of which the Servants of the Eternal who stand close to Him are the kindly and benevolent witnesses. 21

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

LXXXIV

WHEN the firmament shall be rent in twain, 1
And the earth shall discharge the burden of those whom
she beareth in her bosom, 4
Whoso then shall have given into his right hand the
reckoning of his works, 7
He shall have an account easy to settle. 8
He shall return joyfully to the bosom of his friends. 9
But he to whom this reckoning shall be handed from
behind, 10
Shall wish to disappear and vanish altogether! 11

LXXXV

THOSE who believe and who practise good works shall
have as their recompense fair Gardens where sweet waters
flow. So will Happiness without limit be theirs, and joy
unending. 11
Yet can also the wrath of thy Lord rage furiously. 12
For 'tis He who giveth being to all, but He likewise
who bringeth all to naught. 13
Spite of all He is yet the Indulgent who loveth tenderly
and cherisheth as a Father. 14
He is God enthroned on heights unreachable, 15
His Will is law and there is none other. 16

LXXXVI

As truly as the stars revolve in the heavens, 11
As truly as the earth openeth to give forth sheaves of
golden corn, 12

SELECTED VERSES

So truly is the Qur'ān the voice of God, dividing asunder right from wrong, and discerning good and evil. 13

LXXXVII

PRaise and adore the name of thy Magnanimous Lord, 1
Who createth and bettereth; 2

Who decreeth our destinies and sheweth us the Way of Life. 3

Preach the word, be instant in warning, whether they hearken and profit or whether they turn away. 9

Whoso feareth God doeth well to reflect. 10

Blessed is he who hath clean hands and a pure heart, who preserveth his soul from evil, 14

By calling on the name of the Lord and adoring Him with a fervent spirit. 15

LXXXVIII

HAST thou never heard of the Day when all things shall be overset, 1

The Day when faces shall fall, 2

And be full of gloom and despair; 3

But when others shall be radiant with joy, 8

Secure in the knowledge of works accomplished? 9

Verily these shall dwell in the Gardens sublime and glorious, 10

Where never a frivolous word or unseemly jest shall be spoken. 11

There are sparkling fountains which rise in glittering spray, 12

And there are thrones high raised, 13

And goblets brimmed with blushful Hippocrene—nectar celestial; 14

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

While silken cushions ranged along 15
On sumptuous tapestries and woven wonders of the
loom, await the Loyal and the Leal. 16

LXXXIX

WHEN to test and try a man God granteth him His
favours, 14

Then saith he: 'Oh, how the Lord doeth me honour!' 15

But when, to try him again, God retracteth his gifts
and doleth them out with scanty hand, 16

Then crieth that same man: 'Oh, how the Lord neglec-
teth me!' 17

Nay, the Lord doeth but mere justice to such an one,
who himself hath no pity on the orphan, 18

Nor compassion on the needy. 19

He hasteneth to devour the inheritance of others, 20

For he is greedy after riches. 21

Such an one will surely some day declare: 'Oh that
I had been just and generous!' 24

But to the ripened and mellow soul God will say: 27

'Return thou to thy Lord, full of joy and content, 28

'Enter the company of My elect. 29

'Be with them in My Paradise.' 30

XC

WE have created man as a weak, feeble creature. 4

Albeit he conceiveth himself as a dominant being! 5

He crieth even aloud: 'What sacrifices have I not made
to help the poor and needy!' 6

Doth he not comprehend that no one marketh what he
doeth? 7

SELECTED VERSES

Yet hath he two eyes wherewith to see, 8

A tongue and two lips withal to express the imaginations and designs of his heart. 9

We have caused him to know the two ways. 10

Howbeit he chose not the good road, which goeth ever upward. 11

And how shalt thou learn the toil of its ascent? 12

It consisteth in freeing the slave, 13

In sustaining the needy in times of famine and privation, 14

In helping the orphaned children of relatives, 15

And in holding out the hand of friendship to the homeless who have not where to lay their head; 16

It consisteth in being of those who believe in God, who walk constantly in His Way and faint not, and who exhort others to pity and kindness. 17

Such, at the Day of the Last Judgement, will be men of the Right Hand. 18

But those who go their ways, disdaining Our signs and scorning the Faith, they shall be men of the Left Hand. 19

Alas for them, they shall be ringed round by devouring fire! 20

XCI

By the sun flashing forth his rays, 1

By the moon, when she followeth close behind him, 2

By the day which shineth bright at full noon, 3

And the night which extendeth its cool darkness under the myriad stars, 4

By the blue sky above us and by Him who raised it and set it fast there, 5

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

By the firm earth beneath our feet and by Him who spread it out like a carpet, 6

By the soul of man and Him who perfected it, 7

By warning it of its sins and by breathing piety into it, 8

I declare that he who keepeth pure his soul shall attain to happiness, 9

But he who corrupteth it shall fall into catastrophe. 10

X C II

YE strive for various aims and divers ends, 4

But he who giveth alms and avoideth sin, 5

Who hath faith in the fair Promise of the Lord, 6

Before him will We open the way to joy unceasing; 7

But before him who is mean and miserly and loveth naught but worldly gain, 8

Who despiseth the fair precepts of his Lord, 9

Before him gapeth wide the road to ruin. 10

To him who giveth away his substance that he may be clean of heart and worthy of his Lord, 18

Without even a thought that the benefit will return to him in recompense; 19

And who desireth naught but to deserve well of his Lord, 20

On him, of a surety, do We bestow all Our Mercy! 21

X C III

BE not hard-hearted towards the orphan, 9

Nor repulse the needy when he holdeth out his hand, 10

And return thanks continually for the benefits with which the Lord doth overwhelm thee. 11

SELECTED VERSES

XCIV

HAVE We not, O Prophet, made thy heart full of joy, 1
By lightening the burden which was weighing heavy
on thy shoulders? 2-3

Have We not, in like manner, given lustre to thy
name? 4

Behold, then, the easy now followeth on the hard, 5
And verily success cometh close on the heels of striving. 6

So, when the daily task is ended, rise thou and go to
prayer, imploring the Blessing of the Lord. 7

XCV

WE made man a creature of balanced rhythms and perfect harmonies. 4

We allowed him, notwithstanding, to relapse into the
abyss of perdition, 5

Save those who believed in God and had sympathy for
others. . . . 6

XCVI

READ—in the name of thy Lord, who hath created all
things, 1

Who hath created man from a clot of dried blood. 2

Read—and know that thy Lord is Great and Generous. 3

It is He who taught by means of the pen, 4

Taught that which man knew not at all. 5

Nevertheless, man is obstinate and stiff-necked and
rebelleth, 6

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Yea, he holdeth his head high, full of haughtiness and pride, 7

Forgetting that all things return unto God! 8

What thinkest thou of him who hindereth 9

His neighbour from doing good? 10

Would it not be far better if he himself were to follow the good Way, 11

And preach piety, rather than prevent it? 12

Beware lest thou give heed to such as would hinder thy well-doing, and humble thyself before God, that thou mayest draw ever nearer to His presence. 19

XC VII

WE caused the Word to come down on the night of Qadr. 1

Who shall teach thee the meaning of that glorious night, and show thee its signification? 2

It hath more virtue in its sole self than a thousand months put together. 3

On that night came down the angels and the Spirit, by order of their Lord, to dispose events according to His will. 4

Blessing raineth down on men all through this night, continuing till the breaking of the dawn. 5

XC VIII

THEY who believe in God and do good deeds are in truth the best of all His creatures. 7

Their recompense from their Lord shall be an everlasting sojourn in gardens where sweet waters flow.

SELECTED VERSES

Through Eternity shall they stay there in unfading immortality. 8

God shall delight in them and they shall find joy in Him. Yea, abundant happiness is laid up for those who fear to displease their Lord. 9

XCIX

WHEN the earth shall quake with that shock which is fore-ordained, 1

When she shall have given up her burdens and cast off what was laid upon her, 2

Then shall men cry aloud: 'Alas for calamity!' 3

Then shall the earth bring to light what was hidden in her bosom, 4

According to the command of thy Lord. 5

On that Day, men shall come forward in companies to look on the work of their hands. 6

And he who hath done good, be it but the weight of a grain, shall see it clearly. 7

He also who hath done evil, be it but a scruple in weight, shall behold it. 8

C

IN truth man respondeth not to the lavish kindness of his Lord. 6

And he ought, of a surety, to admit his ingratitude, 7

He who coveteth greedily the goods of this present world, 8

But when the tombs shall be shattered and laid open, 9

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

And the secrets buried deep within them shall be revealed, and displayed in the open day, 10

Then will God be present there, fully informed of the deeds of all men. 11

C I

ON the Day when men shall be scattered like frightened grasshoppers; 3

Those whose deeds shall weigh heavy in the balance shall joy in perfect bliss. 5

But those whose works shall be found vain and light shall dwell in the ditch of darkness. 6

And who shall tell thee what lieth in this yawning pit, 7

Which roareth forth flames like a devouring furnace? 9

C II

TO increase your riches and find power therein, that is the whole object and aim of your lives, 1

Up to the moment when ye are carried to the tomb. 2

But then, oh then, ye shall comprehend the Truth, 3

And the meaning of things shall be borne in upon you. 4

Ah! If ye but knew what awaiteth then, 5

And could see with your eyes here and now the flaming pits of Hell! 6

If ye might but behold the latter end from near at hand, as it were already present to you, 7

Then would ye no longer doubt that a reckoning will be exacted of the good things ye now enjoy. 8

SELECTED VERSES

CIII

By the sinking of the sun and the reddening of the west,
announcing the time of evening prayer, 1

I swear that man worketh his own perdition. 2

Save those only who believe and who practise good
deeds, even as those who preach Truth and perseverance
in the Faith. 3

CIV

Woe to him who beareth false witness against his
neighbour, and useth a slanderous tongue to his hurt, 1

And heapeth up riches which he reckoneth greedily. 2

Thinketh he that his treasures will give him life ever-
lasting? 3

Ah, no! He shall be cast into the bottomless pit. 4

Heart cannot conceive of the terrors of hell, nor can pen
convey to us its torment and fear. 5

'Tis the brazier of God, a cauldron of flame, 6

Which shall waft away swiftly the hearts of the con-
demned. 7

They shall be wrapped around as in the burning vault
of a kiln, glowing with fierce heat, 8

And upheld by pillars of sheer flame. 9

CV

Know'st thou not what thy Lord did of old time to
warriors who were borne into battle by elephants? 1

Did he not turn their boldness to disaster and their
audacity to ruin, 2

QUR'ĀNIC WISDOM

Arousing against them a never-ending shower of winged assailants springing into space and thronging the sky? 3

Then did these attack them with their poisonous darts, 4
And laid them low like dead leaves to become the breakfast of worms.³⁰ 5

CVI

THEN let the people of the Quraish adore the Master of the Temple. It is He who hath preserved them from famine, and hath delivered them from terror and destruction. 3

CVII

I MAKE complaint of those, yea, I murmur regarding them, whose worship of God is careless and unreal, 4
Those who make their prayers to be seen of men, 6
And draw back their hand from helping the needy. 7

CVIII

WE have made thee to drink the new wine of thy Lord; thy cup runneth over, 1
Render thanks unto God and make offerings to Him. 2
The strivings of thy foes shall be of none effect. 3

CIX

SAY then: 'Oh ye idolaters! 1
'I by no means worship that which ye adore, 2
'Nor do ye adore Him whom I worship in truth. 3

SELECTED VERSES

'To you be your superstitions, and to me the one true Faith.' 6

CX

WHEN divine Aid shall come and the hour of Triumph shall be here, 1

Thou shalt see men in multitudes, yea, in ranged armies, following the Way of God. 2

Sing the praises of thy Lord and implore His Mercy upon them. Who is a pardoning God like thy Lord? 3

CXI

MAY the hand perish of the villain who kindleth the fire! 1

May his goods and his gains fade away, of which he hath never enough! 2

It is written in his fate that he will be choked in a whirlpool of flames, 3

And with him his mate who beareth the faggot. 4

She who weareth already round her throat the encircling noose of twisted cord. 5

CXII

SAY: 'He is the God, the One and Only, 1

God the unchangeable, 2

Who ne'er begot offspring, nor was of any other born or begotten. 3

To Him can none other ever be likened. He hath no equal or peer. 4

NOTES ON THE SELECTED VERSES

1. Between the Jews and the Christians.
2. This verse forms one of the main sources from which Islamic theology and ethics have been derived.
3. This verse has sometimes been translated in a base and improper manner, contrasting unfairly with the general tenor of the Qur'ānic text.
4. People thoroughly instructed and well versed in the Holy Scriptures.
5. By this verse marriage with more than four wives at once was forbidden, in contrast to which polygamy had been previously practised without any restrictions whatever. The end of the verse opens the way to legal monogamy, which Turkey was the first Muslim country to adopt formally.
6. Thus the Qur'ānic theory regarding the divine nature in Jesus Christ is really very close to the Christian conception.
7. A kind of baptism which is repeated and renewed from time to time.
8. The common people among Orthodox Christians in the East, and even the clergy of the lower ranks, often hold a view differing very little indeed from this.
9. This verse witnesses to the fact of the continual development and progress in the scale of existence of all living beings.
10. This verse gives the basis for belief in the unchangeable nature of the Qur'ānic Word.
11. The people who separate themselves from the Truth.
12. The Angels.
13. Verses like this were revealed to protect Muḥammad when it was cast up at him that he led an ordinary commonplace life and did not work any miracles like those ascribed by tradition to the prophets of old time. Nevertheless the doctors and schoolmen of Islām are unanimous in allowing that Muḥammad did possess supernatural powers, which, however, were known only to his closest intimates. There is no lack of traditions and legends in support of this belief.

NOTES ON THE SELECTED VERSES

14. The seven verses of the first chapter (the *Fātiḥa*) recited at every act of worship.

15. From the Temple of Mecca to that of Jerusalem.

16. The annual giving of alms prescribed as obligatory on all Muslims, and called *Zaqāt* in the Qur'ān.

17. The lunar day, according to the Arabs, begins when the sun sinks below an angle of 45° with the meridian. Thus it is the hours of prayer at noon (*zuhr* ظهر) and in the afternoon (*'aṣr* عصر) which are in question here.

18. In adding the Spirit to the body.

19. People instructed in the Sacred Scriptures.

20. Of which the nine months in the womb are counted a part.

21. Intelligence and free will.

22. This *Sūra* is known as 'the Heart of the Qur'ān'.

23. The angels in their various ranks and degrees.

24. A Spirit or an Angel.

25. The reference is to joyful events and to victories preceding the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims.

26. The watcher on the right hand noting down good deeds and he on the left evil deeds.

27. By the declining towards the horizon of the former and the shadows lying along the ground of the latter.

28. The cosmic equilibrium of the universe.

29. For a period of four months, after which they are allowed to marry again.

30. Some Abyssinians who marched to besiege the city of Mecca in A.D. 570 were attacked by an epidemic of small-pox and forced to raise the siege.

PRINTED IN
GREAT BRITAIN
AT THE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD
BY
JOHN JOHNSON
PRINTER
TO THE
UNIVERSITY

